

*1994*

*SAVE*

*FIVE*

*OUR*

*YEAR*

*RIVERS*

*PLAN*





## *Dedication*



The professional stewardship of SOR lands and resources has received assistance from many volunteer groups and individuals. Many of these donations are organized and formally recognized, but many are individual acts of commitment to the conservation ethic, which go unrecognized. This year's five year plan is dedicated to all those volunteers who have given their time and talents to the District's Stewardship Program.

### *A partial list of these volunteers include:*

**Florida Trail Association  
(Various locations)**

**DuPuis Horsemen's Association**

**The Nature Conservancy**

**Boy Scouts (Various locations)**

**Lainhart Church Volunteers**

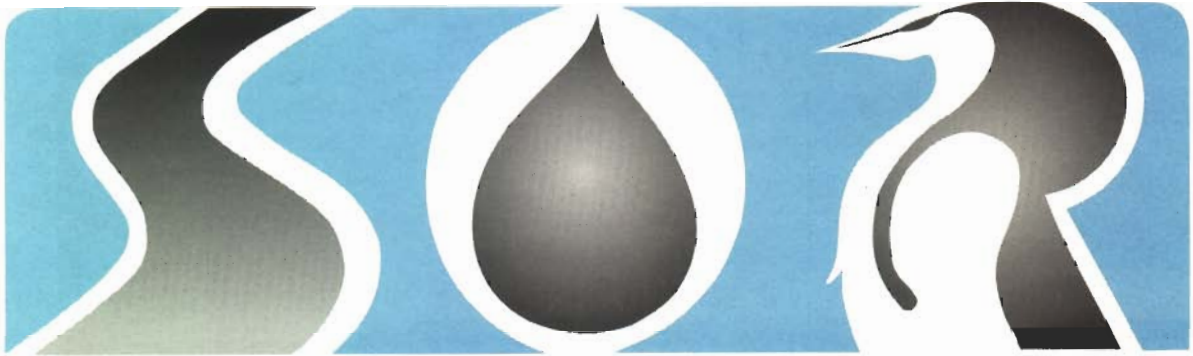
**Disney Development Company Volunteers**

**GFC Reservists**

**Martin County Native Plant Society**

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**

# Save Our Rivers



## Land For Waters' Sake



### *Five Year Plan*

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*Land Stewardship Division  
Department of Land Management  
P.O. Box 24680, 3301 Gun Club Road  
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680  
(407) 686-8800*



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Since the state created its Save Our Rivers Program in 1981, Florida has made great strides in acquiring environmentally sensitive "land for water's sake." The state and its five water management districts remain committed to preserving those lands that are key in restoring and maintaining larger regional ecosystems. The South Florida Water Management District and its sister agencies are working with the Department of Environmental Protection and the Governor's Greenway Commission to champion a statewide plan to acquire, protect, and manage the lands necessary to sustain these ecosystems.

Nowhere is this land acquisition and stewardship more critical than in South Florida's major environmental corridors -- the Kissimmee River, Lake Okeechobee, the Everglades and Florida Bay. Through the Save Our Rivers program, the District has acquired more than 150,000 acres to conserve the region's water resources as well as to protect its water supply. The District will use much of this land to restore the Kissimmee River, Okeechobee and Everglades Ecosystem.

Because of the urgent need to restore these shrinking natural areas, the South Florida Water Management District has dedicated \$85 million in this "1994 Save Our Rivers Five-Year Plan" specifically to restore and protect this interconnected watershed. This will be added to the \$106 million we have spent to date acquiring land for this program.

We also have expanded our proposed acquisition areas to include more land directly related to restoring the Everglades and Florida Bay. The Frog Pond and L-31N lands, if acquired, could be used to restore the hydroperiod of the eastern Everglades and to improve the flow of water to Taylor Creek and Florida Bay.

For this ecosystem restoration to succeed, the District must acquire lands in the following areas:

- \* Around Lake Cypress, Lake Hatchineha, and Lake Kissimmee to increase their water-shortage capacity the C-38 canal, to complete the Kissimmee River restoration;
- \* In the Everglades Agricultural Area, for filter marshes next to the water conservation areas;
- \* In south Dade County, to restore the hydroperiod of Taylor Slough in eastern Everglades National Park, and
- \* In buffer area along the eastern boundary of the conservation areas in Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties.

The District also needs to finish acquiring lands in the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed in Lee and Collier counties. The CREW area is a tributary to the Big Cypress National Preserve, part of the western Everglades. We also must begin to identify lands needed in Hendry County's Okaloacoochee Slough, which also feeds the Big Cypress.

Important acquisition opportunities in 1994 exist elsewhere in the District. We hope to buy land in the Pal Mar and Loxahatchee Slough projects, thus completing the link between the DuPuis Reserve State Forest and Jonathan Dickinson State Park in Palm Beach and Martin counties. We also believe we can complete a major acquisition in the Upper Lakes Basin project, thus helping to preserve the headwaters of the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades ecosystem.

The South Florida Water Management District is in the forefront nationally in working to create a naturally functioning water-based ecosystem to reverse past environmental damage. Once these systems are restored, their water-resource benefits will accommodate properly planned urban and agricultural growth without endangering our vital natural resources.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. J. C. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.



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## *1994 Save Our Rivers - Five Year Plan*



# I ntroduction

The South Florida Water Management District (District) is a regional agency working to protect and manage the wetlands, lakes, bays and rivers of south and central Florida. The District is the largest of five districts established across the state to act as guardians of the quality and supply of each region's present and future water resources. The mission of the District is to manage water and related resources for the benefit of the public and in keeping with the needs of the region. The key elements of the mission are:

- \* Environmental protection and enhancement
- \* Water supply
- \* Flood protection and
- \* Water quality protection.

In 1981, the Florida Legislature enacted a program known as "Save Our Rivers (SOR)." The legislation created Section 373.59, Florida Statutes, the Water Management Lands Trust Fund. The trust fund receives revenues from the documentary stamp tax and is administered by the Department of Environmental Protection (formerly Department of Environmental Regulation). Section 373.59 enables the water management districts to use moneys from the trust fund for the acquisition of fee or other interest in lands necessary for water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of water resources. The act specifies the allocation formula to each District and the process for use of the fund.

Funds are also added from the Preservation 2000 Act. The Legislature enacted Preservation 2000 in 1990. The act creates the Florida Preservation Trust Fund, which is administered by the Department of Environmental Protection (formerly Department of Natural Resources). Projects must meet both criteria from Preservation 2000 and Save Our Rivers acts.

The South Florida Water Management District is responsible for acquiring such critical water resource lands in South Florida under the state's Save Our Rivers (SOR) program. The District programs' key emphasis revolves around the major purposes of the program: water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of water resources.

As steward of these vital resources, it is the charge of the District to provide for their protection, enhancement, restoration, and preservation for the beneficial use and enjoyment of existing and future generations.

Manageability, surface and ground water systems, and

the formation of corridors for the critical interaction of wildlife populations are major considerations in the land acquisition process. Prime requisites in managing these public lands are to ensure that the water resources, fish and wildlife populations, and native plant communities are maintained in an environmentally acceptable manner, and made available for appropriate outdoor recreational activities consistent with their environmental sensitivity. The care and nurturing of these resources may be accomplished in cooperation with other governmental agencies and the private sector through the design and implementation of appropriate stewardship programs.

## Evaluation and Selection Process

Section 373.59, Florida Statutes, specifies that monies from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund shall be used for acquiring fee title or other interest in lands necessary for water management, water supply and the conservation and protection of water resources. In addition, lands which include other features are eligible as well. These include, but are not limited to:

- \* River and stream flood plains and flow ways
- \* River and stream flood hazard areas
- \* Littoral zones
- \* Springs and lakes
- \* Aquifer recharge areas
- \* Wetlands
- \* Wellfields
- \* Unique water features

Each January, the South Florida Water Management District must submit to the Legislature and the Department of Environmental Protection, pursuant to the Water Management Lands Trust Fund, an annual update to the Five-Year Plan.

In 1988, the South Florida Water Management District began a proactive program of identifying lands within the District that might be suitable as candidates for acquisition. Save Our Rivers applications from private and public groups were reviewed, and District staff selected other sites for consideration from small-scale aerial photography.

**Land Evaluation Matrix:** The Save Our Rivers staff developed a matrix which addresses the water and natural resource values of each parcel. The matrix consists of the following ten parameters:

- \* Water Management
- \* Water Supply

- \* Conservation and Protection of Water Resources
- \* Manageability
- \* Habitat Diversity
- \* Species Diversity
- \* Connectedness
- \* Rarity
- \* Vulnerability
- \* Nature Oriented Human Use

The Land Evaluation Matrix is set up to review parcels for the water resource related issues (Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources), before consideration is given to environmental values. If proposed projects do not have appropriate water resource values, they are not evaluated for the remaining seven categories. Following on-site and aerial inspections of each tract, the value of each project, with regard to the matrix parameters, is determined by a team of senior technical staff.

A project benefits criteria system is a second method utilized to address projects which protect the integrity of ecological systems and provide multiple off-site as well as on-site benefits. These include the preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, recreation space, and water recharge areas. Projects are included in order to reverse the decline in the ecological, aesthetic, recreational and economic value of the State's water resources.

This system applies to projects designed primarily to supply off-site water resource benefits. Thus, evaluation is performed not on the lands themselves, as with the resource-based matrix, but consider the way these lands will be utilized within the described project. Examples for benefits provided by such lands would be:

- A. Distribution systems to simulate sheet flow inputs into wetlands systems.
- B. Detention systems operated to simulate the natural hydrograph for delivery of water into natural wetlands, lakes or estuaries.
- C. Water quality treatment system utilizing managed or unmanaged wetland vegetation processes.

- D. Groundwater recharge and/or water table control to facilitate recharge to aquifers or retain seepage from water storage facilities.
- E. Buffer access or transitional areas necessary to protect core lands from adverse impacts, provide wildlife corridors provide for public enjoyment of the core land, or isolate certain management practices such as flooding and prescribed burning.

All proposed projects must meet the following criteria: (any land acquisition would require prior Governing Board approval of the subject plan).

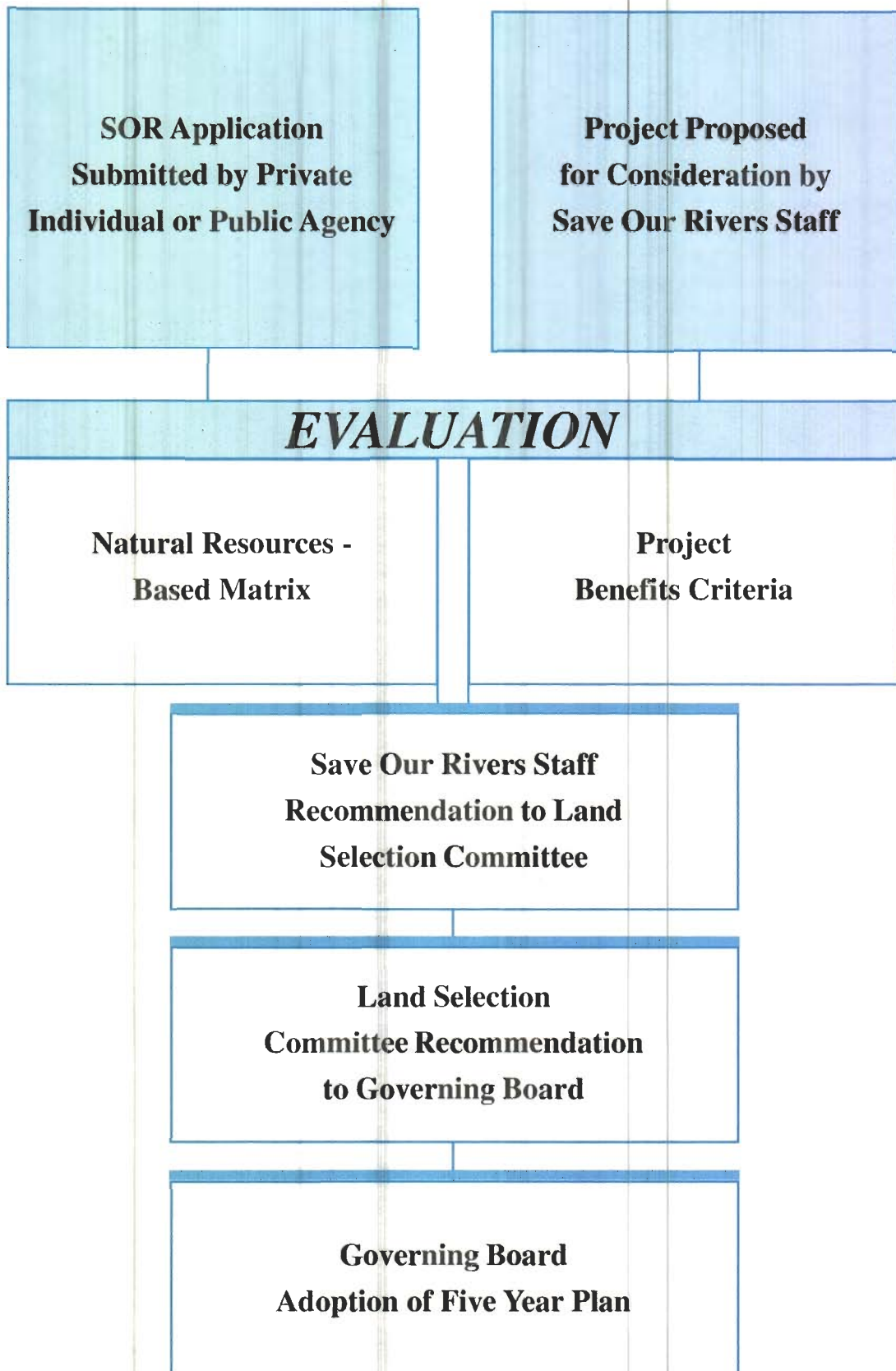
1. Proposed project lands are identified in a District Plan such as Water Use Management Plan (WUMP) or Surface Water Management Plan (SWIM), and
2. Subject lands would be utilized to provide simulated or naturally functioning water resource quality/quantity benefits,
3. Lands would be part of the project resulting in net increase of natural resource values when considering both any on-site losses and off-site gains, and
4. Capital improvements, such as canals, levees, weirs, and pumps shall be limited on only those necessary to achieve the proposed water resource benefits, and
5. All appropriate funding sources for acquisition have been identified.

Staff recommendations are presented to the Land Selection Committee, which consists of senior managers representing all of the Districts departments. The endorsements or changes from the Land Selection Committee are presented to the Governing Board for final approval as the annual Five-Year Plan.

Persons reviewing this plan should be aware that funding levels and other factors may not allow acquisition of all lands shown in the plan.



# ***SELECTION AND EVALUATION PROCESS***



*1994 Save Our Rivers - Five Year Plan*



# L and Stewardship

The Florida Resource Rivers Act specifically states that Lands acquired with money from the fund shall be managed and maintained in an environmentally acceptable manner and, to the extent practicable, in such a way as to restore and protect their natural state and condition and make available to the general public for appropriate recreational purposes. Further, Section 373.59, Florida Statutes, as amended, provides that up to 15% of the monies in the Water Management Lands Trust Fund may be allocated annually to the District for management, maintenance and capital improvements. District activities directed at achieving this level of stewardship are divided into the following categories

## **I. STEWARDSHIP PLANNING**

## **II. STEWARDSHIP IMPLEMENTATION**

## **III. FIVE YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **I. STEWARDSHIP PLANNING**

Stewardship planning includes the development of Strategic, Conceptual and Operational Management Plans. Strategic planning includes development of the District's water resource corridors concept, integration of the District's acquisition plan with other state and local programs, and coordination of acquisition and management programs with regulatory programs. Conceptual Management Plans are prepared to provide long-term goals and objectives and to establish a direction for the management of individual properties. Operational Management Plans are more specific with regard to what, why, how, and when various management activities will be undertaken, and which recreational activities are compatible.

A key element in the preparation of conceptual and operational plans is the environmental assessment, which is conducted for each parcel. The environmental assessments supply descriptions of the existing plant and animal communities and make recommendations for action to be taken to restore or maintain natural conditions.

### **II. STEWARDSHIP IMPLEMENTATION**

The District's efforts under stewardship implementation revolve around three major areas. The principal management efforts are listed under each heading, followed by a brief description of each:

- A. Restore and protect the natural state and condition.
  - a. Hydrologic restoration
  - b. Exotic control
  - c. Habitat protection and enhancement
  - d. Environmental Monitoring

- B. Manage and maintain in an environmentally acceptable manner.

- a. Conserve, maintain and protect water resource-related features
- b. Prescribed burning
- c. Grazing
- d. Fencing

- C. Provide public recreation.

- a. Fishing and other water oriented activities
- b. Hunting
- c. Hiking
- d. Camping
- e. Horseback riding
- f. Environmental and water resource education programs

### **A. RESTORE AND PROTECT**

**Hydrologic Restoration** -- The most important stewardship task is returning SOR lands to as near a natural state, hydrologically, as possible. This provides for groundwater storage in wetlands, water quality improvement by slowing the rate of surface runoff, and habitat improvement for fish and wildlife. The Kissimmee River is the District's most aggressive restoration effort. Less intense programs are either planned or underway at the DuPuis Reserve, Nicodemus Slough, Loxahatchee River, and Southern Glades (Canal 111). These efforts range from the installation of diversion dams and water control structures in the Kissimmee River to filling or blocking drainage swales and ditches at the DuPuis Reserve.

**Exotic Control** -- Includes the selective application of environmentally acceptable herbicides in a manner not harmful to the resource.

**Habitat Protection and Enhancement** -- Habitat enhancement on SOR lands includes a combination of hydrologic restoration in wetlands, prescribed burning to improve forage for wildlife and maintenance of native plant communities, and control of exotic vegetation.

**Environmental Monitoring Program** -- The environmental monitoring program is to evaluate the success of our land management and restoration programs. The program includes development of natural community maps and evaluation of changes in vegetation by monitoring plots and photomonitoring points. The wildlife observation/inventory program tracks what species use Save Our Rivers lands. Once discovered, threatened and en-

dangered species are monitored. The location of rare plants is noted and recorded. Special management needs of rare species are incorporated into conceptual and operational management plans.

## **B. MANAGE AND MAINTAIN**

**Conserve, Maintain and Protect Water Resource - Related Features**--Natural features of the South Florida landscape are rapidly being lost to agricultural and urban development. A major thrust of the Save Our Rivers program is to protect the flow ways, watersheds, and wetlands, which are critical to the water resources of the District.

**Prescribed burning**--Periodic fire is a natural element of native Florida ecosystems. The District uses prescribed burning as a tool for land management purposes, such as reduction of hazardous fuel load build-up, wildlife habitat enhancement and encouraging the restoration of native plant communities. The District began burning SOR lands in 1988, and intends to burn the larger tracts on an approximate three to five year rotation. Lands where burning is occurring include the South Fork St. Lucie River and several of the tracts along the Kissimmee River. Some SOR lands are being burned by agencies such as: Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, County Governments and the National Park Service under cooperative management agreements.

**Grazing** -- Livestock grazing has been a customary activity on many of the lands purchased under the SOR Program. Studies have shown that when undertaken properly, livestock grazing is one of the most efficient means of effectively managing our native range lands. The District has been working closely with the USDA Soil Conservation Service and other cooperating agencies to identify properties, or portions of properties, suitable for this activity, and to design and implement grazing plans that are compatible with the goals and purposes of the program. District policy prohibits the conversion of native range to improved pasture. Where properties have been acquired that contain improved pastures, measures will be implemented to encourage their conversion to native range or woodland

**Security of Lands** -- In order to delineate the District's property lines, deter trespass/vandalism and protect the integrity of the resource, some of the SOR land holdings are fenced and posted following acquisition. Fencing is replaced on an as needed basis. The District contracts for additional security service to provide after-hours and

weekend coverage. This general surveillance of lands and law enforcement helps prevent misuse, dumping of waste material, unauthorized hunting, trespassing and other unauthorized activities.

## **C. PUBLIC RECREATION**

**Environmental Education** -- The District is developing an environmental education program to inform school groups and the general public about the importance of maintaining water resources and environmentally sensitive land tracts. Environmental education workshops for teachers have been conducted on many SOR properties. SOR properties are always available for responsible research and educational activities.

**Hiking and Camping** -- The Florida Trail Association (FTA) is working closely with the District on the development of hiking trails on SOR lands. Primitive campsites are being designated at appropriate locations along these trails for use by backpackers. Maintenance of the trails will be performed by FTA members. The Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST), one of eight officially designated national scenic trails, is currently being developed by FTA in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and a host of federal, state and local agencies and private landowners. A portion of the FNST has been certified for location along the Kissimmee River. Hiking trails provide a means by which visitors can view and enjoy, in quiet solitude, these sensitive lands. By eliminating areas used by off-road vehicles, plant and animal species are less likely to be subjected to adverse impacts.

**Horseback Riding** -- The District is consulting with a variety of horseback-riding interests regarding the development of equestrian trails on District lands. Thirty-six miles of Equestrian trails have been developed for the DuPuis Reserve, and it is anticipated that additional areas may be targeted in the future. Care is being taken to limit the construction of these trails to suitable ecosystem types and to avoid sensitive wetland areas. Trail development and maintenance will be undertaken by private trail-riding organizations and/or other public agencies under appropriate agreements with the District.

**Fishing and Other Water-related Activities**-- Fishing, boating and canoeing are limited to those SOR projects associated with rivers, such as the Kissimmee, Loxahatchee and South Fork St. Lucie.

**Airboating** -- Airboating may be allowed on lands within Water Conservation Areas 2 and 3, as well as selected tracts along the Kissimmee River, and around the Chain of Lakes.



**Hunting** -- The District, in cooperation with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, has opened SOR lands that are large enough, and support adequate game populations, for public hunting. Hunt programs are designed to provide a quality hunting experience while maintaining healthy populations of game species. Seasonal harvest quotas are established by the commission and are based on annual population surveys. Annual hunting regulations are proposed by the Commission for each area and approved by the District. Walk-in hunting is encouraged, as vehicular access is limited to the use of street licensed vehicles (excluding motorcycles) on designated roads.

#### **D. COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS**

The District strives to obtain the expertise capabilities required for the management of SOR lands by entering into cooperative management agreements with other state and federal agencies, local governments, and private organizations.

Under the terms of these agreements, the cooperator may assume all or a limited number of management functions. These agreements may be funded, although cooperators who can donate in-kind services are preferred.

The District usually retains responsibility for management of the water resources with the project. These agreements greatly enhance the District's management capabilities, although substantial administrative and technical oversight is required to assure that the principles of our stewardship program are being adhered to.

### **III. FIVE YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

#### **A. NEEDS**

As the acquisition program continues to add land to the management function, the needs for management resources will grow.

In order to realize the full potential of our Save Our Rivers program, the following commitments need to be considered:

##### **1. Increase planning resources.**

- a) to assure that our acquisition program is properly focused and is in cooperation with state and local programs, including the District's revised mitigation program.

- b) to provide water and natural resource analysis of potential acquisitions to assure that our dollars are wisely invested.
- c) to assess, plan, and design the necessary natural resource restoration programs which restore the land and water resources back to the natural state and condition.
- d) to assess, plan, and design the necessary land maintenance and management programs to assure that the natural resources are preserved and protected in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- e) to assess, plan and design appropriate public use and recreational programs on the SOR lands. SOR lands are public assets, and it is the public which should be a principal beneficiary of this program both in terms of general recreation and education.

##### **2. Increase evaluation and monitoring resources.**

- a) to monitor, evaluate and refine the water resource restoration projects.
- b) to monitor, evaluate and refine the land management practices such as:
  - 1. Exotic vegetation control
  - 2. Prescribed burning
  - 3. Reforestation
  - 4. Cattle grazing
- c) to monitor, evaluate and refine the public recreation and use programs to assure that the resource values are not being degraded and that public needs are being met.

##### **3. Increase maintenance, security and management capabilities.**

- a) to support public use, education facilities and programs.
- b) to protect and preserve the natural resources.
- c) to operate and maintain various restoration projects.
- d) to assure the interagency management programs.
- e) to provide sound business administration of the natural resource, recreational and real estate assets.

##### **4. Increase the public access and awareness of the SOR program.**

- a) by creating and maintaining volunteer programs.

b) creating and maintaining brochures, videos, exhibits and other mass communication efforts explaining the SOR program.

5. Increase technical capabilities for land use planning, evaluation and management by employing a GIS data base and analysis program. This should include a program to collect contemporary land use/cover data via remote sensing techniques (aerial/satellites photos or images).

The total manpower, financial, and commodity needs for the entire SOR program is a function of management approach (internal or contractual) and intensity (passive or proactive). At current levels of activities and plans, the program will involve approximately 200,000 acres of land valued at over \$200,000,000 by 1998. The program will be a part of a major environmental restoration project, several regional water quality and water supply projects, and own or control access to major tracts of highly sensitive and endangered habitats, including Florida's only Wild and Scenic River, and Everglades National Park. These circumstances place the program in a pivotal position with respect to the Districts management and stewardship responsibilities for the 21st Century. Our requirements for the next five years are to provide the planning, organization, resources and leadership commensurate with this obligation to the future of Florida's water and natural resources.

## B. PROGRAMS

The management resources need to be increased and organized in order to accomplish the goals and objectives of the SOR program, due to the ever increasing amount of land to be managed. There are three major functions that are necessary for the management of the program.

### 1. Administrative Support

This group includes the managerial, administrative, secretarial, clerical and appropriate technical support functions. The role of this group is to provide managerial and policy direction. To provide coordinating functions, both internally and externally, on issues of program planning, selection and funding. To provide administrative support for contracts, leases and other real estate and business or related needs; and to provide program promotional and communication functions.

### 2. Planning and Evaluation

The planning function should be organized on three levels.

**A. Strategic.** These planning activities evaluate the entire programs acquisition and management status from the overall District perspective. This function develops policies, proposed projects, acquisition priorities in term of the Districts goals and strategic plans. It also integrates the Districts program with other federal, state and local acquisition programs, and coordinates with regulatory programs such as off-site mitigation. In addition, it reviews and revises project identification, evaluation and selection criteria, and conducts these activities. This function will rely heavily on the GIS system.

**B. Conceptual.** Conceptual planning for each identified project is performed by this group. This function gathers and analyzes the physical/geographical, water resources, and natural resource data on each project. Using this data, this team produces conceptual management plans which includes water resource management and restoration plans, natural resources/land management plans and recreational, public use/education plans. This process uses existing data, GIS data management systems and contractual studies/plans to produce these products. This function requires substantial support from aerial photo and satellite image data and GIS data management systems.

**C. Operational (Tract/Project).** Operational planning may be done on individual tracts within large watershed, i.e., Kissimmee River Valley or an entire small preservation watershed, i.e., Big Pine Key. These functions lay out the necessary steps to translate the conceptual plans into operational management guidelines for the Field Operations Units and/or management cooperators. Operational plans contain specific guidelines and programs for:

- 1) Water management practices for environmental restoration, water supply augmentation and flood water storage.
- 2) Land management practices for exotic removal, prescribed burning, and cattle grazing.
- 3) Public use practices such as general recreation, hunting, day use, overnite use and educational centers.
- 4) General guidelines on security, hazardous materials, structures and other improvements.

### 3. Field Operations and Public Use

Operations. Due to the location and nature of field operations activities, these functions must be decentralized to field locations. Depending on the management philoso-



phies and objectives identified for several of the large conservation watersheds, it may be necessary to create several field operations units. These units would implement the management responsibilities assigned to the District within the Operational plans. These units would have general security, operation and maintenance, and administrative responsibilities of all tracts from time of purchase to implementation of approved operational plans. These units would implement the operational plans for a project that is retained by the District. These units would incorporate the use of convict labor and community volunteer groups to accomplish the objectives. These functions would be coordinated by the Land Management Coordinator with the assistance of professional land manager specialist, water resource engineers, environmentalist, and recreational specialist, as well as field maintenance crews and supervisors.

### C. RESOURCES

As the acquisition program continues to bring land into District ownership, during the next five years, the management program must keep pace. The following is a general accounting of the possible staff needs by the end of the next five years.

#### I. STAFF

Director	(E)
Administrative Assistant	(E)
Administrative Secretary	(E)

### 2. PLANNING UNIT

Planning Coordinator	(E)
Environmental Land Use Planners	(E) (N)
Wetlands Ecologist	(E)
Water Resource Engineer	(E)
Recreation Planner	(E) (N)
Land Use/GIS Technician	(E) (N)

### 3. OPERATIONS UNIT

Field Operations Manager	(E)
Area Managers	(N)
Land Managers	(2E)
Maintenance Crews Supervisors	(E) (N)
Equipment Operators	(5E) (3N)
Clerical Staff	(N)

E = Existing

N = New

## *1994 Save Our Rivers - Five Year Plan*



# Summary of Stewardship Activities

## PLANNING

### General

The long-range management needs for the stewardship of SOR and other District lands continues to be evaluated. Based on simple projections of current rates of expenditures/acre, growth in acres to be managed and rates of management fund income from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund (WMLTF), it appears that the WMLTF will be unable to meet all SOR land management needs after FY 94. Efforts are underway to identify and utilize additional funding sources, such as mitigation, in-kind services, grants, and ad valorem taxes.

The analysis of future management requirements also identified the need for a master plan to determine the best way to allocate District resources. An outside consultant will be hired to evaluate various management options, including expanded SOR service centers, utilization of existing field stations, contractual service agreements, and management agreements with other state and local agencies. This analysis will be completed in time for the FY '95 budget cycle.

### Master Acquisition Plan

The SOR staff continues to work with other District planners, the CARL program, and other state and regional organizations to compile and evaluate the master land acquisition needs map. Integration of the various identification, evaluation and mapping efforts throughout the state employing GIS techniques should result in a composite map of needs within the next year.

### Off-site Mitigation

The District's SOR needs for acquisition, restoration, and perpetual care are being considered as acceptable mitigation projects by various regulatory agencies. This acceptance appears to be favored by the regulated community. District SOR staff have been advocates of this policy, since it tends to support the master acquisition plan concept and helps relieve the financial burden of stewardship management costs.

Several SOR restoration needs were approved as off-site mitigation projects in 1993, including:

1. Wetland restoration on Johnson Island, Kissimmee Chain of Lakes
2. Hydrologic reconnection of DuPuis Reserve State Forest and Corbett Wildlife Management Area
3. Hydroperiod restoration of the south end of Savannas
4. Exotic plant control for Everglades Buffer Strip

5. Partial funding of L-8 Marsh restoration, DuPuis Reserve State Forest

### Projects

#### CREW

The Governing Board adopted the conceptual management plan for the CREW project in August, 1992.

In accordance with the plan, the Game and Freshwater Fish Commission (GFC) has prepared a proposal to conduct wildlife and habitat inventories and develop a wildlife management plan for CREW by 1995. The District will enter into a cooperative management agreement with the GFC in FY 94.

#### DuPuis Reserve State Forest

The District, Division of Forestry (DOF), GFC, and other interested parties continue to work on refining the management goals and plans for the state forest.

#### Issues under review this year were:

Forest management goals, objectives, and techniques. Beetle infestations, high fuel loads, and unusual weather conditions have presented difficult challenges to the managers of this area.

Public use opportunities and facilities—The types and intensities of public use activities are being reviewed. An interpretative trail is being planned and designed.

There were two public workshops and two field tours during the year to review and discuss these and other management issues in the Forest.

#### South Fork St. Lucie

The District's SOR staff assisted Martin County in preparing a successful application to the Florida Communities Trust to acquire an additional 37 acres north of the existing 100 acre South Fork project. This proposed acquisition will be combined with the existing project and be managed jointly by the District and Martin County.

## OPERATIONS

### Habitat Enhancement

#### Nicodemus Slough

Major management efforts were invested in this project during the year. District staff cleared unwanted exotics and other vegetation from around the borrow lake. This area is being replanted with appropriate native aquatic and upland vegetation and later converted to a day use area.

Over 500 acres of the Slough was roller-chopped to retard wax

myrtle growth and additional areas were treated with herbicides to control exotic vegetation.

### DuPuis Reserve State Forest

In 1992, the SOR operations unit installed three (3) ditch plugs in the canal along the east boundary of the Forest. These plugs have helped to restore a more natural hydroperiod to the southeastern edge of the Forest. Terrestrial vegetation, including the exotic Japanese climbing fern have been adversely affected. The remaining part of this work will be completed by Florida Power and Light Cooperation, as a mitigation project.

### Exotic Control

The District's SOR program conducted or directed exotic control activities on over 2,600 acres during the year. These activities included work by the SOR operations unit in Nicodemus Slough, Kissimmee River Valley, and CREW. The District's herbicide contractor treated areas in the Kissimmee Valley and Strazzulla. Management partners conducted major efforts in the Loxahatchee River (Department of Environmental Protection/Palm Beach County), Southern Glades (Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission), and DuPuis Reserve State Forest (Division of Forestry).

### Prescribed Burning

Over 4,000 acres of fuel reduction and habitat improvement prescribed burns were planned for this year. However, wet winter conditions resulted in slightly less than 1,900 acres being treated with fire in the Kissimmee Valley and at Johnson Island in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes.

These fire treatments were generally successful in reducing fuel loads. In mid-June, the DOF and GFC conducted a large aerial burn (5,400 acres) of the DuPuis Reserve State Forest. This fire was also successful in reducing fuel loads and improving wildlife habitat.

### Management Activities Evaluation

A methodology for systematically evaluating management activities within a variety of habitats was completed. Implementation of this program which includes establishment of permanent vegetation sampling and fixed photograph sites was completed for several habitat/treatment combinations. Photographs and vegetative sampling has began.

This effort also includes periodic inventories of listed plants and wildlife and development of community type land cover maps. The first GIS land cover map was produced (South Fork St. Lucie River) by a student intern, during the summer of 1993.

### Inspections and Assessments

During the year, each of fifty separate tracts of land was inspected at least three times by SOR staff. In some cases, these inspections were by air. In addition, contract security

forces patrolled certain properties and on-site managers provided security for lands under management contracts. There were several minor trespass events during the year, but no major acts of vandalism or illegal use occurred.

Newly acquired tracts undergo an initial management assessment to develop the annual work plan for the property. During the year, assessments were performed on several new tracts in the Kissimmee Valley and CREW.

During the year, a new formal process was begun which involved a pre-acquisition assessment by the SOR management team to identify management issues and concerns associated with potential acquisitions. A number of potential acquisitions in the Kissimmee Valley and Upper Chain of Lakes were assessed during the reporting period.

### Public Use

In August, the Governing Board approved policy changes related to public access and use of SOR and other District lands. These policy changes were designed to expand and accelerate public access and use by developing a set of public use guidelines and rules.

In March, the Governing Board authorized the staff to initiate rule-making. Public workshops were held in April. Due to considerable public interest and concern with the proposed rule, a substantial revision is being prepared. It is anticipated that this rule making will be completed in FY '94. The District's rules will apply to lands not adequately covered by the rules and ordinances of cooperative management partners.

During the year, the Lake Okeechobee section of the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) was dedicated. The FNST is designed to extend the entire length of Florida. This 104 mile section was one of the largest single dedications of the trail system administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

The District staff, in cooperation with the Florida Trail Association, also planned, designed, and initiated clearing of 1.5 miles of South Fork St. Lucie trail.

Several SOR properties are used regularly for hiking, hunting, canoeing, horseback riding, and environmental studies. There were over 45,000 recorded visits to SOR lands and undoubtedly many more unrecorded visits.

Construction was begun by Orange County Parks and Recreation Department on the Environmental Education and Visitor Center at the Tibet-Butler Preserve (formerly known as the Lake Forest Preserve). This center will be operational by early 1994.

## NEW PROJECTS AND PLAN ADDITIONS

### New Projects

Four (4) new projects were added to the 1994 SOR Five Year



Plan. These projects are:

**1. North Savannas, St. Lucie County.** This 900 acre project, proposed by St. Lucie County is located along the west side of U. S. 1 in the extreme north end of the county. It contains scrub, pine flatwoods, and marshes. It provides recharge to the Surficial Aquifer, attenuates local stormwater.

The management needs of the area include hydrologic restoration, exotic control and prescribed burning. The public access is good and public use potential is high.

St. Lucie County is a potential management and acquisition partner.

**2. Johnson Ranch, Highlands County.** This project was proposed by the Florida Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The project is 1,642 acres and is located in the Fisheating Creek watershed and floodplain. It contributes to the Creek's baseflow. It contains pine flatwoods, emergent marshes, and scrub habitat. It supports colonies of red-cockaded woodpeckers and scrub jays. Moderate restoration (ditch plugging) is needed. There are few exotics. The site is remote so public use would be low. The property would require prescribed fire management and security to prevent unauthorized use.

**3. Twelve Mile Slough, Hendry County.** This 3,125 acre project was proposed by the owner. It is the first SOR project in Hendry County. It is in both the Caloosahatchee River and Okaloacoochee Slough watersheds and provides recharge to the Surficial Aquifer. There is a diversity of habitat types, including wetlands, pine flatwoods, and oak/cabbage palm hammocks. Part of the property has been identified as panther habitat. There are numerous drainage ditches that should be plugged, and the current grazing pressure should be reduced. Exotics are not a major problem. The site is remote, but the diversity would make it an interesting hiking area. Management needs include prescribed fire, and upland and wetland restoration.

**4. Frog Pond/L-31N Transitional Lands, Dade County.** These two areas, each about 5,200 acres in size, are located along the east boundary of Everglades National Park (ENP). These areas were proposed by District staff and evaluated by the Land Selection Committee using the Project Benefits Criteria.

If purchased, these areas would be managed with higher water tables in order to provide increased and improved distribution of flows to ENP and to facilitate higher water tables in the Park. Currently, land use is predominantly row crops in the Frog Pond and row and orchard crops in the L-31N Transition lands. The desired higher water tables would preclude the continued use of these areas for agricultural activities.

#### Project Boundary Revisions

The boundaries of four (4) existing SOR projects were revised.

**1. Southern Glades, Dade County.** Dade County requested that 7,533 acres be added to the north side of the existing Southern Glades project. These lands are transitional wetlands with shorter hydroperiods than the wetlands in the original project. They would add diversity to the project and act as a buffer to the intense land development to the north. However, these lands are heavily infested with exotics. This area is known to be used by Florida panther.

**2. Model Lands Basin, Dade County.** Dade County also requested that 10,620 acres be added to the north side of the existing Model Lands project. The nature of this addition is very similar to that described for the Southern Glades addition.

**3. CREW, Lee and Collier County.** The SOR Division and the Big Cypress Basin Administrator contributed proposals for adding to the existing CREW project. Four of the six proposed additions were recommended for approval by the Land Selection Committee.

The additional lands are upland and wetland buffer areas to lands within the existing 55,000 acre CREW project. The addition areas would contribute land to four separate parts of CREW.

The Corkscrew Marsh addition is a mixture of wet prairie and low pine flatwoods. It totals approximately 1,800 acres and would connect Lake Trafford with lands currently owned by the District.

The Corkscrew Sanctuary addition covers approximately 1,450 acres and borders Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. It consists of high quality cypress swamp and former uplands which were cleared for row crops.

The Board of Education addition is 320 acres of swamp forest which lies between two agricultural fields and connects Board of Education lands to the west with State Road 846 to the east.

The Flint Pen Strand addition covers approximately 500 acres in Lee County and consists of pine flatwoods mixed with cypress swamp forest. It would provide much needed upland habitat and direct road frontage for the project on Corkscrew Road.

**4. Shingle Creek, Orange & Osceola County.** The Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society and District staff have proposed several additions to the existing Shingle Creek project. The Audubon Society proposed adding approximately 2,300 acres to the project by extending the project into Osceola County from the county line to the Seaboard Coastline Railroad bridge crossing south of Kissimmee. Since the original project terminated just north of the Orange/Osceola County boundary, District staff proposed closing the gap by adding an additional 100 acres of floodplain at that point. The third addition, is about 200 acres on the north side of the original project. This area is currently being donated to the District.







## Summary of Acquisition

### July 1992- June, 1993

Acquisition from the beginning of the Save Our Rivers program in 1981 through June 1992 totaled 161,004 acres at land cost of \$134,177,722.

Acquisition during the 1993 Plan period (July 1992 - June 1993) added approximately 2,669 acres at land cost of \$12,571,588. These acquisitions bring the Save Our Rivers program totals for June 30, 1993, to 163,673 acres at a land cost of \$138,699,710. Note: 447 acres of the Everglades Buffer Strip was purchased with funds other than SOR at a cost of \$8,049,600. These lands are included in the total acreages, but the dollars are not included in the total SOR funds expended. See Table 1 for details of which lands were purchased with what funds.

The complete list of acquisitions are shown on the next page. The high apparent cost per acre of these acquisitions are due to the inclusion of the Everglades Buffer Strip lawsuit settlements as acquisitions.

There are an additional 2,618 acres of land which were approved for purchase but are pending closing. Purchase of these lands will expend an additional \$3,400,032. A complete list of these pending transactions are also shown on Table 2.

Acquisition activity involved the following individual projects:

**Kissimmee River Restoration.** The District was granted

a flowage easement by the Nature Conservancy on 622 acres of Walker Ranch, along the shore of Lake Hatchineha. An additional 76.1 acres in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes is awaiting closing. In the Kissimmee Valley, 1,043 acres were approved for purchase, but have not closed as of July 1, 1993.

**CREW.** The 771 acre Musca tract was purchased. This property is located in the Bird Rookery section of the project in Collier County. It is adjacent to the previously acquired Fisch tract.

**Southern Glades.** An additional 302 acres was purchased in the Southern Glades project. The third option of the Aerojet property was offered to the District and accepted. This 1,300 acre parcel will close in the fall of 1993.

**Shingle Creek.** Orange County donated 313 acres within the Shingle Creek project boundaries that had been deeded over to the County as mitigation.

**Everglades Buffer Strip.** Significant progress was made on acquiring this area. Twenty-three separate tracts were closed. These closings included 207 acres purchased with \$3,733,200 of SOR funds and 447 acres purchased with \$8,049,600 of District funds. Many of these transactions are a result of settling several legal actions within the project. The purchase price includes various settlement fees. The land cost will eventually be shared by the District, SOR, and Broward County.

**SAVE OUR RIVERS**  
**ACQUISITION ACTIVITY (CLOSED)**  
**July 1, 1992 - June 30,1993**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Number of Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Fund</b>
Everglades Bufer Strip	22	447.2	\$8,049,600	District
Everglades Buffer Strip	3	207.4	\$3,733,200	SOR/P-2000
Southern Glades	2	301.9	\$214,398	SOR/P-2000
CREW	2	771.1	\$574,390	SOR/P-2000
Shingle Creek	1	313.0	0	SOR/P-2000
Kissimmee Chain of Lakes	1	622.3	0	SOR/P-2000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2,668.9</b>	<b>\$12,571,588</b>	

*Table 1*

**SAVE OUR RIVERS**  
**ACQUISITION ACTIVITY (PENDING)**  
**July 1, 1992 - June 30,1993**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Number of Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Fund</b>
Everglades Bufer Strip	2	17.6	\$450,000	SOR/P-2000
Everglades Buffer Strip	2	21.0	\$269,312	District
Water Conservation Area	1	160.0	\$16,000	District
Southern Glades	1	1,300.1	\$682,920	SOR/P-2000
Kissimmee Chain of Lakes	2	76.1	\$222,800	SOR/P-2000
Kissimmee	14	1,043.7	\$1,759,000	SOR/P-2000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2,618.5</b>	<b>\$3,400,032</b>	

*Table 2*





*1994 Save Our Rivers - Five Year Plan*

ACQUISITION PLAN (1994)





# Acquisition Plan (1994)

The 1994 SOR Five-Year Plan reflects a conservative outlook on acquisition funding. The plan utilizes all approved Preservation 2000 funding. The plan also assumes that the Water Management Land Trust Fund revenues will be \$8,800,000 for FY '94 and that SOR management cost will utilize up to 15% of that income.

For the 1994 SOR Five-Year Plan, the following criteria were utilized to establish the general acquisition priority for qualified SOR projects.

## 1. Standing on the District Strategic Plan

SOR land acquisition is an integral element of the District's overall strategic plan for resource management. The priority for SOR land acquisition needs, as identified in the Strategic Plan, is a major factor in developing the SOR acquisition priority.

## 2. Potential for Resource Loss

Continued development activity in and around identified SOR projects raises concerns about loss of resource values for these projects if they are not protected by outright purchase or conservation easements. The Departments of Planning and Regulation, as well as local governments, are consulted annually as to the trend in development pressures around various SOR projects.

## 3. Potential for Cooperative Acquisitions

Several SOR projects are potentially qualified for cost sharing with other state and local agencies. Other projects are located in counties with land acquisition programs. Projects that can be acquired and/or managed with cost-sharing programs and remain consistent with SOR objectives receive priority consideration. It is important to establish the intent of the potential partner before granting a priority status.

## 4. Disposition of Owner(s)

The expressed willingness of the owner(s) of specific critical tracts within an SOR project is a factor in the acquisition priority consideration. Conversely, well managed lands owned by private interests reluctant to sell are given a low priority, even if the resource values are high.

Although this priority analysis should apply to SOR projects, it may be necessary to single out certain key tracts within a project as the critical factor for a priority; that is, the status or priority of certain core tracts within a project may determine the priority of the overall project. In these cases, the commitment of funds to the project should be to acquire the core pieces rather than the less critical (lower priority) tracts.

The Priority Acquisition Plan was developed using these criteria. The acquisition resources of the District will be specifically directed to accomplish this plan. However, any qualified SOR project may be considered for acquisition during the life of this plan as conditions and circumstances warrant.

The objective of the Save Our Rivers program is to acquire necessary interests in lands for water management, water supply, conservation and protection of water resources. The Five-Year Plan shows projects that have been determined to meet the Save Our Rivers objectives. Projects have been submitted from a variety of sources and analyzed through the District Save Our Rivers matrix. However, financial and other constraints may not allow acquisition of all lands included in the Five-Year Plan.

The Five-Year Plan indicates to local governments that certain lands within their jurisdiction meet the criteria for Save Our Rivers project consideration. Budget, or other considerations, may constrain the acquisition of these lands. Accordingly, local governments should use the Five-Year Plan as only one of the many criteria in making land use planning evaluations.

# Save Our Rivers

## 1994 Five Year Plan

### Priority Projects

Project	Included in Strategic Plan	Potential for Resource Loss	Cooperative Acquisition	Willingness to Sell	P-2000 Criteria
Kissimmee River Restoration	Yes	L			4,6
Everglades Restoration (STA)	Yes	L	Special Taxing District	Yes	6
Florida Bay (Southern Glades, Model Lands, Frog Pond/L-31N)	Yes	M	Dade County		1,4,6
Upper Lakes Basin Watershed	Yes	H		Yes	4,6
South Fork St. Lucie	Yes	M	Martin County	Yes	5,6
Pal Mar	Yes	H	Martin & Palm Beach Counties/CARL	Yes	1,6
Fisheating Creek	Yes	H			6
Loxahatchee Slough	Yes	M	Palm Beach County		1,6
Six Mile Cypress	Yes	L	Lee County	Yes	1,6
CREW	Yes	H	Lee County - CARL		4,6
Water Conservation Area	Yes	L			4,6
Everglades Buffer Strip	Yes	L	Broward County	Yes	6
North Savannas	No	M	St. Lucie County	Yes	1,4,6

#### Assumptions:

1. P-2000 and SOR documentary tax stamps generate \$30,000,000/year.
2. There are sufficient staff resources to execute the program.

#### P-2000 Criteria:

- 1 - Imminent danger of development
- 2 - Imminent danger of subdivision
- 3 - High rate of appreciation
- 4 - Groundwater recharge
- 5 - Purchase at 80% of appraised value
- 6 - Serves/Protects endangered habitat/species





## ***1994 Save Our Rivers - Five Year Plan***

***The goal of the Save Our Rivers Program is to acquire necessary interests in lands for water management, water supply, conservation and protection of water resources. Projects may be submitted by nearly any interested party. These lands are analyzed to determine the extent that each project meets the program objectives. Projects that are incorporated into the Five Year Plan are updated annually.***

***Projects included in the Five Year Plan will not necessarily be acquired. Acquisition is dependent upon the level of funding and a number of priority factors (see Policies 4.100, 5.001).***



# Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed

## 1. General Description:

Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) is a generic name for a vast project covering nearly 60,000 acres in Lee and Collier Counties. National Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary is surrounded by CREW. However, the sanctuary is not included in the project boundary, nor will it be acquired.

In 1993, the District governing board expanded the project by 4,070 acres, to include four additional areas adjacent to Flint Pen Strand, Corkscrew Sanctuary, Bird Rookery Swamp, and Corkscrew Marsh.

In 1993, 1,582 acres were acquired by Lee County. The District purchased an additional 771 acres. Ownership of all land purchased by Lee County will either be sold or donated to the District. These acquisitions bring the public ownership to more than 16,000 acres.

## 2. Project Boundary Revisions:

The addition lands are upland and wetland buffer areas to lands within the existing CREW project. The boundary revisions will contribute land to four separate parts of CREW. The Corkscrew Marsh addition is a mixture of wet prairie and low pine flatwoods. It totals approximately 1800 acres and will connect Lake Trafford with lands currently owned by the District. The Corkscrew Sanctuary addition covers approximately 1450 acres and borders Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. It consists of high quality cypress swamp and uplands which were cleared for row crops. The Bird Rookery Swamp addition is 320 acres of swamp forest which lies between two agricultural fields and connects Board of Education lands to the west with SR 846 to the east. The Flint Pen Strand addition covers approximately 500 acres in Lee County and consists of pine flatwoods mixed with cypress swamp forest. It will provide much needed upland habitat and direct road frontage for the project on Corkscrew Road.

The additional lands provide a mixture of upland and wetland habitats. The Flint Pen Strand and Corkscrew Marsh additions contain high quality pine flatwood and wet prairie communities, both of which are in limited amounts within the existing project boundaries.

The Corkscrew Sanctuary addition contains uplands which were pine flatwoods that were cleared for agriculture. It is proposed that these areas could be restored through mitigation efforts. Some ditch and swale plugging could be done in specific wetland areas, but overall, the wetlands are in relatively good condition.

## 3. Land Stewardship Activities:

### A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition

The CREW Conceptual Management Plan was endorsed by the CREW Trust and District governing board. The major participants in the plan development were Lee County, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Florida Division of Forestry, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Conservancy, Inc., National Audubon, Alico, Inc., Naples Tomato Growers, and the District. The plan addresses management needs and agency responsibilities. SFWMD will be the lead management agency.

Save Our Rivers field crew treated exotics in Flint Pen Strand and Corkscrew Marsh during the past year. Exotic vegetation in Flint Pen Strand was mapped under District contract. Infestations were mapped by species type and concentration. Permanent photo points were installed in representative areas to document treatment effectiveness and spread of the plants. In addition, Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission volunteer reservists treated exotics and posted District lands in Corkscrew Marsh and Bird Rookery Swamp.

### B. Public Recreation

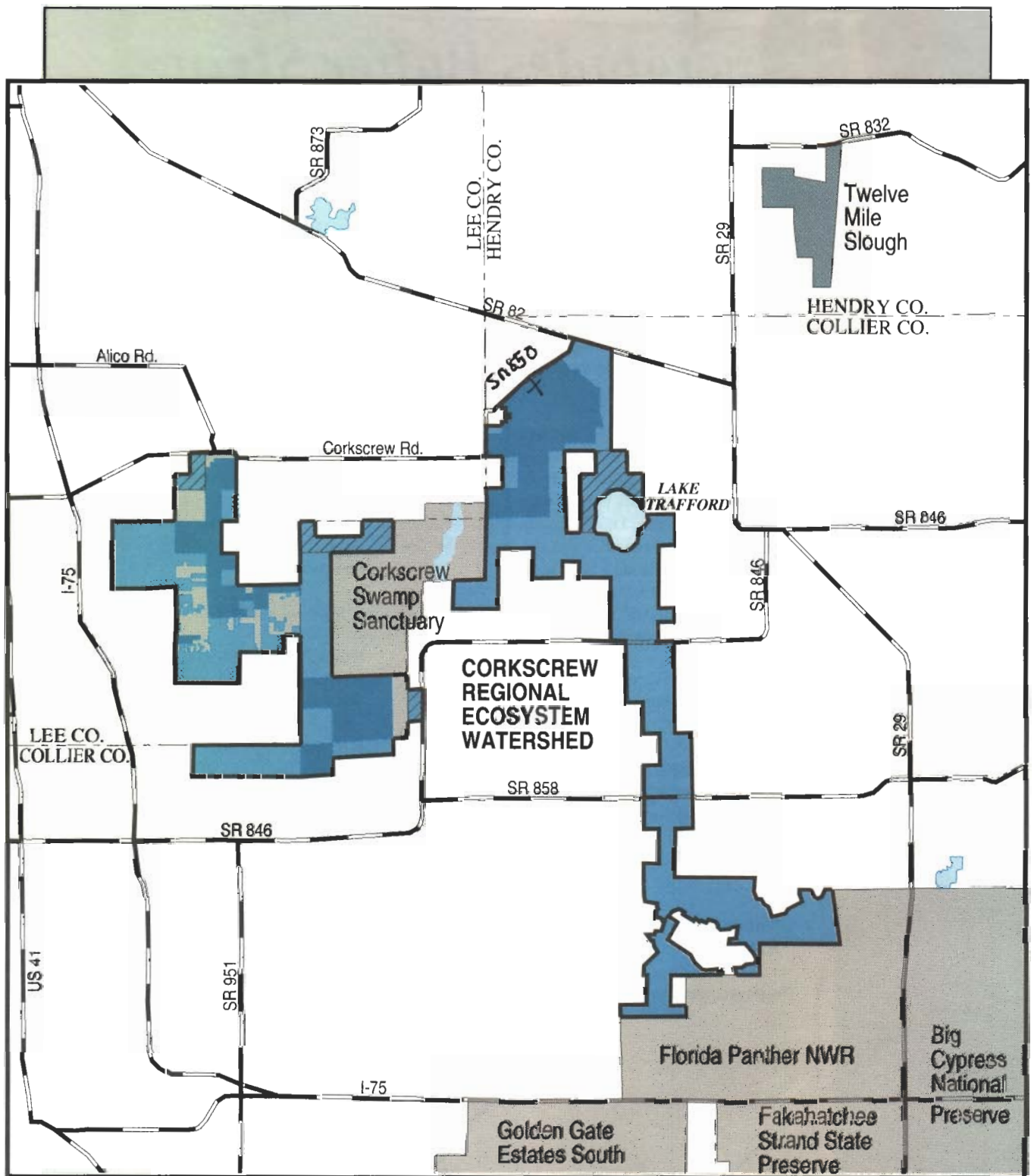
Most of the existing CREW project has limited public use potential due to the dense swamps and sawgrass marshes which dominate much of the area. Some areas have good potential for hiking trail development, although much of the trail may be wet.

It is anticipated that trail development will begin in 1994 in the flatwoods adjacent to Corkscrew Marsh. If permanent public access can be obtained, hiking trails will also be developed along former logging trams in Bird Rookery Swamp.

<i>Counties:</i>	<i>Lee and Collier</i>
<i>Total Project Area:</i>	<i>54,712</i>
<i>Total Acres Acquired:</i>	<i>16,429*</i>
<i>Land Cost:</i>	<i>\$16,704,882</i>
<i>Per Acre Cost:</i>	<i>\$1,017</i>
<i>Acres Remaining:</i>	<i>38,283</i>
<i>Estimated Assessed Value:</i>	<i>\$20 Million</i>

*\*In 1993, Lee County acquired 1,582 acres at a cost of \$4,044,102.*





- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Area
- 1994 Project Additions
- Other Conservation Area
- Other SOR Projects
- SOR Project Boundary

0 2 4 6 8  
Miles



# **E**verglades Buffer Strip

## **1. General Description:**

Everglades Buffer Strip totals approximately 4,000 acres. It exists as a one-half mile wide strip lying between the District's Levee 37 and Levee 33 and U.S. Highway 27 in Broward County. It extends from State Road 84 to the Dade County line.

The project application includes a 1,600 acre portion which extends from SR 84 on the north to Canal 11 on the south.

Everglades Buffer Strip. The additional acquisitions of 207 acres were made on this project with the SOR program. The cost was \$3,733,200. In addition 356 acres within the targeted SOR project were purchased with \$6,690,600 other funds. These transactions are a result of settling several legal actions within this project. Several additional settlements have been approved and are expected to close soon. Due to the unique nature of the project, the land cost will be shared by SOR, District ad-valorem and Broward County funds.

## **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

Conservation Areas 3A and 3B leak large amounts of water through Levee 37 and Levee 33, due to the high head differential that presently exists. District ownership of the Buffer Strip could allow higher control elevations to be maintained, thus reducing leakage from the Conservation Areas.

## **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

The project area has been impacted by rock mining and

exotic plant invasion, primarily Melaleuca. There appears to be a number of constraints to restoration: The existing FP&L service road, the elevation of the sub-grade for U.S. 27, the relative elevation of lands and levees, and the long narrow shape of the project.

## **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

Broward County has indicated significant interest in the entire 4000 acres of buffer strip, which includes the 1600 acres submitted as a Save Our Rivers project. The County is already participating in research for controls to inhibit the spread of Melaleuca. They have indicated an interest in monetary programs to help in acquisition of the land and to assist in Melaleuca removal and control. Early management tasks will include a program to inform the public about the importance of the Buffer Strip and an exotic removal/control effort.

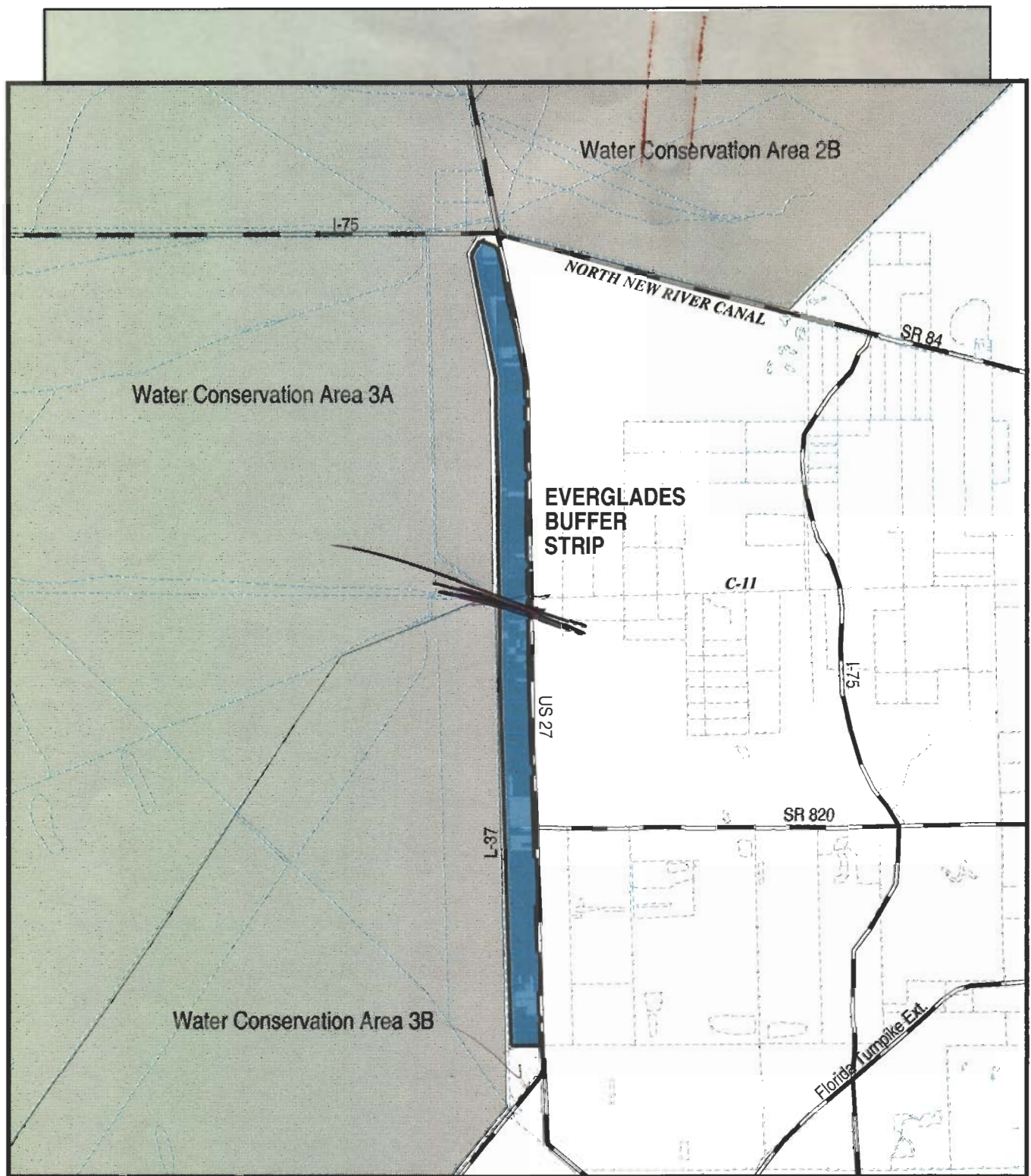
## **5. Recreation Potential:**






Broward County has indicated the Buffer Strip lands offer potential for public recreation, which take advantage of its abundant open-space. Recreational activities could include fishing, canoe trails, and environmental education/interpretive facilities.

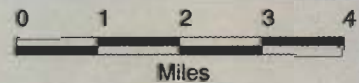
Everglades Buffer Strip. The additional acquisitions of 207 acres were made on this project with the SOR program. The cost was \$3,733,200. In addition 356 acres within the targeted SOR project were purchased with \$6,690,600 other funds. These transactions are a result of settling several legal actions within this project. Several additional settlements have been approved and are expected to close soon. Due to the unique nature of the project, the land cost will be shared by SOR, District ad-valorem and Broward County funds.

<b>County:</b>	<b>Broward</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>1,654 Acres</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>563</b>
<b>Land Cost (SOR):</b>	<b>3,733,200</b>
<b>Land Cost (other):</b>	<b>6,690,600</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>1091</b>
<b>Number of Owners:</b>	<b>Multiple</b>





-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary



NOTE: SOR interests are north of canal C-11 only. South of C-11 is Non-SOR.



# Fisheating Creek

## 1. General Description

Fisheating creek is an extensive riverine swamp system flowing through Glades County. The creek and its headwaters form an extensive watershed covering hundreds of square miles.

In 1991, the District Governing Board approved a boundary revision, which added nearly 15,000 acres to the project. The additional area includes a large freshwater marsh and low pine flatwoods, which buffer the riverine swamp corridor.

## 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

Fisheating Creek is the only free-flowing tributary to Lake Okeechobee. The meandering runs and associated flood plain attenuate peak discharges during heavy storm events and are important for water quality improvement prior to discharges entering Lake Okeechobee. Groundwater resources have not been quantified for this area; however, the Surficial Aquifer has suitable capacity to supply low-volume users.

## 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Much of the uplands and wetlands defined by the limits of this project remain in a relatively undisturbed state. Habitat types include cypress sloughs/mixed hardwood swamp forest, emergent marshes, willow thickets and openwater ponds and runs. Land-use in and around the flood plain is mostly native range. Use by wading birds is very heavy, including endangered wood storks, white ibis and great egrets. When stages in Lake Okeechobee are high, Fisheating Creek serves as an important feeding area for birds, which normally use the lake marshes.

## 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

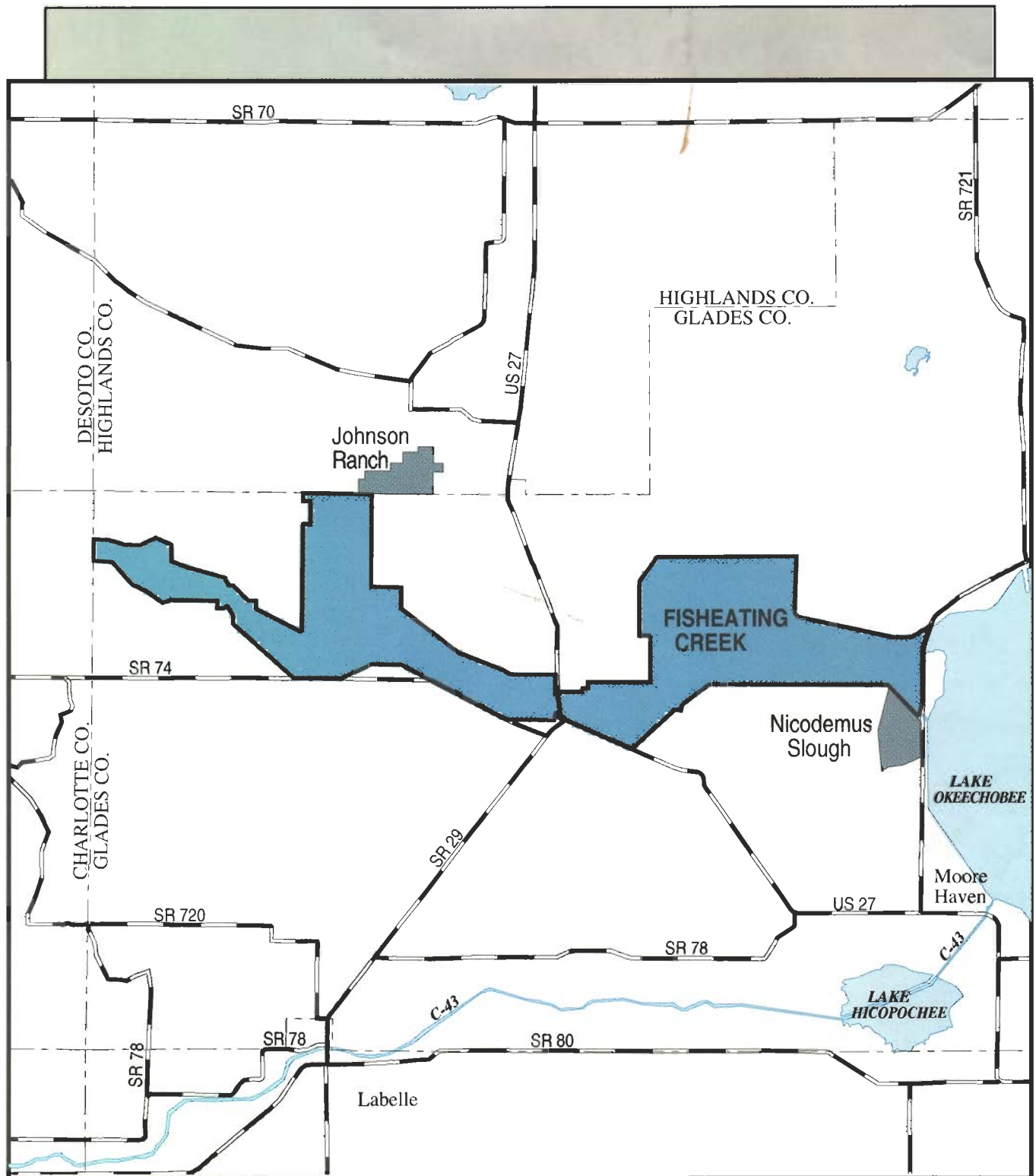
Restoration requirements, if any, would be minimal, as



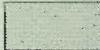


most of the property is in its natural state. A prescribed burning program would be necessary to maintain appropriate species diversity in the plant communities and to reduce the potential for harmful wildfires. Additionally, it would be necessary to target the removal of noxious aquatic weeds from the lakes and creek channel to facilitate canoeing and fishing. Continued livestock grazing would be a likely condition to acquisition of the property and would necessitate the development of an approved program by the USDA Soil Conservation Service in consultation with the District and the livestock operator. Special consideration would be given to maintenance of critical habitat for endangered and/or threatened species, and a trapping program would be required to control the population of feral hogs. Implementation of a comprehensive security program would be needed to prevent unauthorized entry and to discourage poaching and other illegal activities.

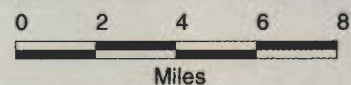
## 5. Recreation Potential:

Acquisition and protection of Fisheating Creek, its floodplain and suitable upland corridor, could provide the public with opportunities for a variety of outdoor recreational activities. The reach of the creek upstream of Palmdale has been a popular canoe run for many years and is famous for its scenic attributes. Opportunities to view and photograph the flora and fauna that abound along the creek could be enhanced by the establishment of suitable hiking trails throughout the property and the implementation of guided tours. A connector trail to the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail around Lake Okeechobee would be a possibility. Access to the Fort Center archaeological site and the provision of appropriate interpretive facilities could provide visitors an insight to the area's history and early inhabitants. Environmental education programs could also be developed to enhance visitor awareness of the area's ecology. A full service campground is located west of US Highway 27 at Palmdale, and would avoid the necessity of providing these facilities elsewhere on the property.

County:	Glades
Total Project Area:	43,872 Acres
Estimated Assessed Value:	\$13 Million
Number of Owners:	One



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# **F**rog Pond/L-31N Transition Lands

## 1. General Description:

The Frog Pond and L-31N Transition Lands cover approximately 10,450 acres and are located in Dade County. The project includes 5,200 acres of agricultural lands known as the Frog Pond, which lie immediately north of the C-111 SOR project, as well as 5,250 acres of transitional lands, which are located east of C-111 and L-31N, north of the Frog Pond, and south of the 8.5 Square Mile Area.

## 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and the Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

The purpose of the project is to increase the hydroperiod of the marshes in eastern Everglades National Park and to improve freshwater flow to Taylor Slough and Florida Bay. Under the South Florida Water Management District's C-111/Taylor Slough Interim Plan, the groundwater table, as controlled through stages in C-111 and L-31N canals, will be maintained at higher levels to promote increased discharge into Taylor Slough.

In addition, the SFWMD preferred plan under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers C-111 General Re-evaluation Report (GRR) calls for a floodway to be located in the Frog Pond agricultural area. This area will serve several purposes:

- A. to simulate the natural hydrograph for delivery of water into Taylor Slough,
- B. to utilize natural vegetation and microbial soil processes to cleanse runoff before discharge into Everglades National Park, and
- C. to restore the connection between Taylor Slough and its headwaters.

## 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

The Frog Pond and Transitional Lands are an integral part of the C-111/Taylor Slough Interim Plan and Corps GRR project that would result in restoration of natural freshwater hydro patterns to Florida Bay. Observations of seagrass die-off, mangrove losses, reduced fisheries, and algal blooms provide strong evidence that the Florida Bay ecosystem is declining under current water management practices. Current delivery of freshwater to the bay differs in volume, timing and distribution from pre-managed conditions. In addition, as recommended in the Everglades SWIM Plan, the Taylor Slough ecosystem within Everglades National Park itself will be enhanced through the improved hydroperiods and re-establishment of sheetflow over existing wetlands under this project.

## 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

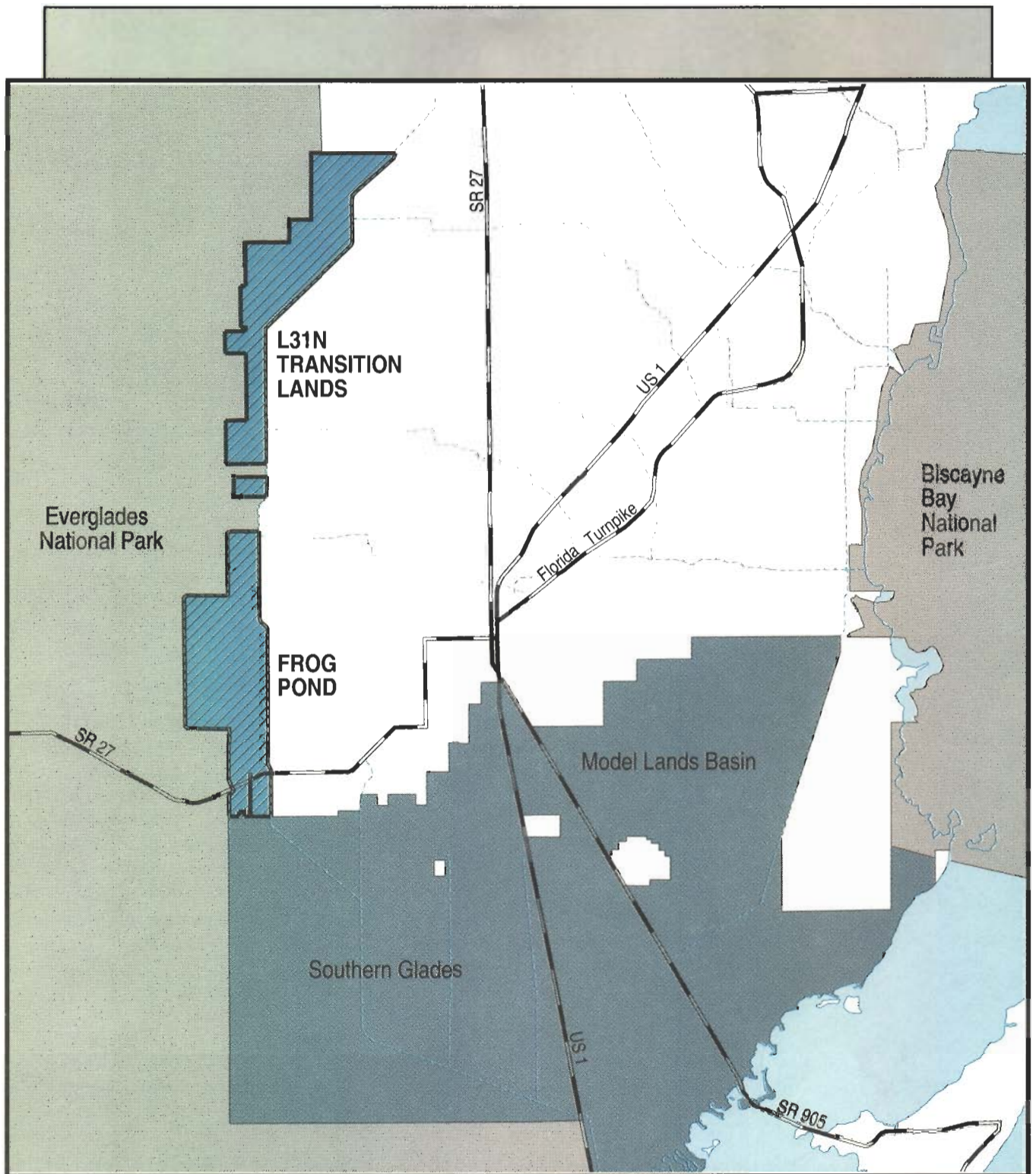
Capital improvements, such as canals, levees, weirs, and pumps will be limited to only those necessary to achieve the proposed water resources benefits. Removal of existing canals and levees along the western boundary of the Frog Pond will be examined as part of the preferred C-111 GRR alternative. The area will be managed in accordance with plans to restore Taylor Slough and Florida Bay. These plans will be developed by the District, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Park Service.







## 5. Recreation Potential

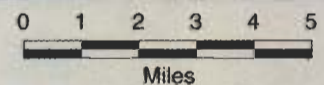
As part of the overall planning process, restoration of scenic benefits at the entrance to Everglades National Park and other public recreational values will be examined. Potential public uses will also be examined for their effects on environmental sensitivity and water management values of the lands.

<b>Project County:</b>	<b>Dade</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>10,450 acres</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>\$60 Million</b>
<b>Number of Owners:</b>	<b>Numerous</b>





-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  1994 Project Additions
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary



# Kissimmee River

## 1. General Description:

The project area covers nearly 81,000 acres in both the upper basin and the lower basin. More than 57,000 acres in the lower basin represents the historic flood plain of the Kissimmee River. This land is necessary for the restoration of the river under the governors Save Our Everglades program.

In the lower basin more than 27,000 acres have been acquired, and 1,000 acres placed under easement agreements, through the Save Our Rivers Program. In addition more than 2000 acres is in non-SOR SFWMD ownership, more than 2,000 acres covered by non-SOR easements, 4,000 acres in State and Federal ownership, and more than 2,500 acres in Federal easements.

In 1991, the project was expanded to include 20,000 acres of the shoreline of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes in the upper basin. This portion of the project is to acquire fee title or flowage easements to allow stages in these lakes to be raised from 52.5' NGVD to 54' NGVD. The additional water is needed to drive the Kissimmee River restoration project by providing year round flow. In the upper basin nearly 4000 acres have been acquired, more than 900 acres placed under easement and almost 1500 acres placed in State ownership.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities

### Planning

The consultant continued work on the Conceptual Land and Natural Resources Management Plan. This plan is expected to be ready for public input during 1994.

### Exotic Control

**Bluff Hammock** - Okeechobee County. The District exotic plant control contractor treated twenty acres of Cogon grass. Operations and Maintenance Department continues to monitor previously treated Cogon grass plots.

**Hamm** - Highlands County. SOR staff treated several Cogon grass infestations for a total treatment area of approximately three acres.

**Hickory Hammock** - Highlands County. The contractor treated additional Cogon grass sites. SOR staff personnel treated several miles of boundary and interior fencing for Brazilian pepper.

**Kicco** - Polk County. The district contractor treated

eleven miles of C-38 and five miles of the Old Kissimmee River bank for Brazilian pepper. Fifty-seven Cogon grass sites on C-38 spoil were treated.

### Range Management

SOR Environmentalist have been working with the SCS Range Management Specialist to complete range management plans for ten grazing leases in the Kissimmee Valley. The pilot project to re-establish native grasses was continued at KICCO and Yates Marsh. Several varieties of native grasses were planted on these sites.

### General Maintenance

Minor road and culvert repair, fence mending, and general clean up was conducted on several properties in the Kissimmee Valley and Tiger Creek on Lake Kissimmee. Cleanups of old trailers, tanks, and assorted junk were conducted on Hickory Hammock South.

### Hydrologic Restoration

SOR environmental analysts coordinated the drawdown and future operation schedule of the Rattlesnake Marsh on the KICCO Wildlife Management Area with the Department of Water Resource Evaluation. The drawdown began in November and is being coordinated with other management operations such as cattle rotation and fire management. Water levels are being monitored by the KICCO caretaker. SOR field operations personnel and the LMD staff engineer provided technical advice on a wetland project on Johnson Island.

### Environmental Monitoring

#### **Bluff Hammock**

**Vegetation** - Two photopoints were set up in the floodplain marsh to evaluate land management activities.

**Wildlife** - Wildlife observations are recorded during site visits and a data base set up to track observations

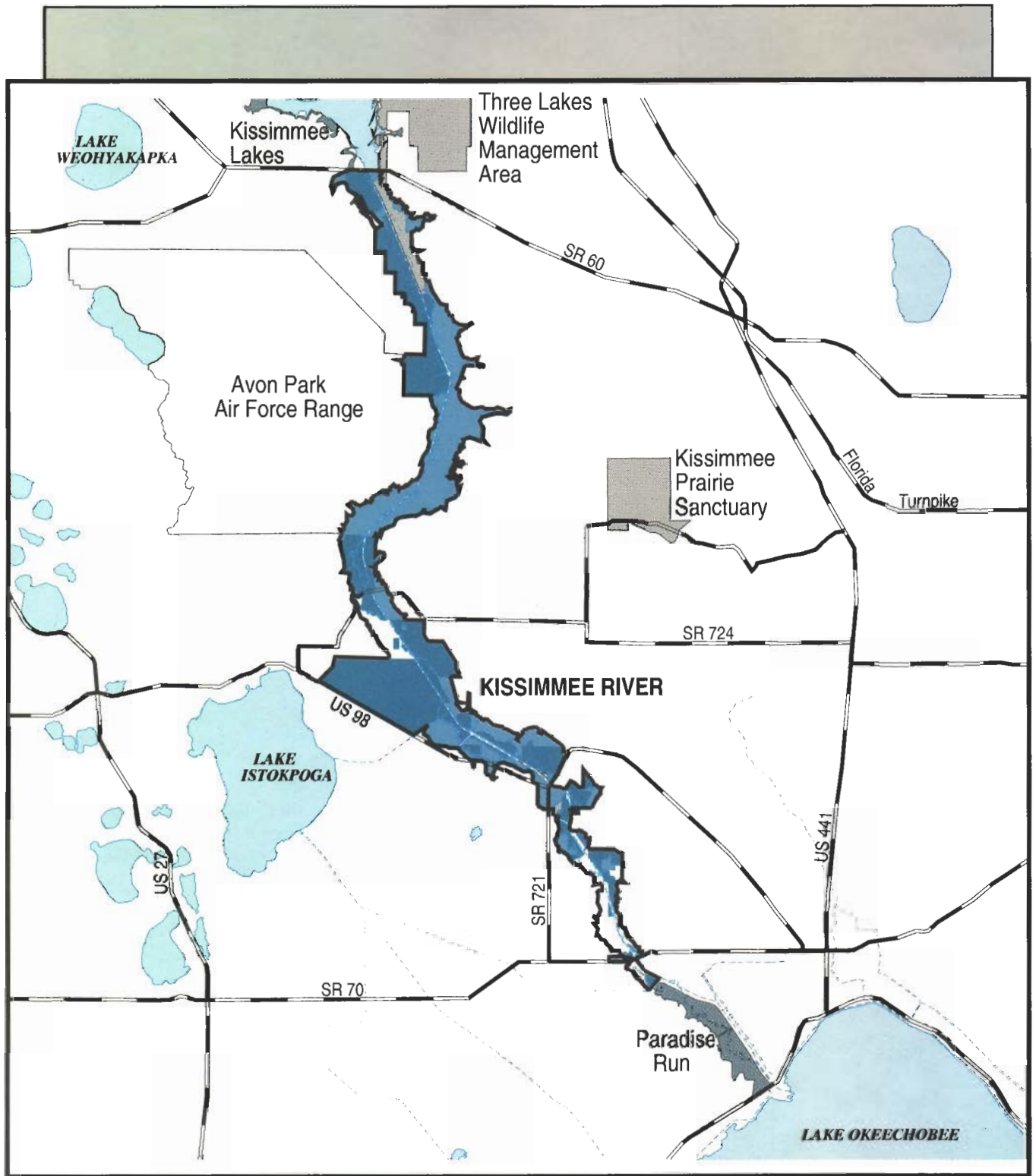
#### **Hickory Hammock**


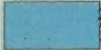
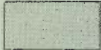

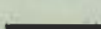
**Vegetation** - A natural community map is being created for the property. Vegetation monitoring plots have been set up in the wet prairie, basin marsh, and floodplain marsh community types. Photomonitoring points accompany these vegetation monitoring plots.

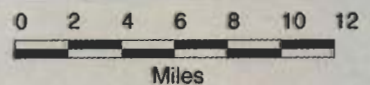
#### **Kicco**

**Vegetation** - A natural community map is being created for this project. Vegetation monitoring plots and





-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





photopoints were established in the dry prairie and floodplain/basin marsh community types to evaluate our management and restoration programs.

#### **Lanier**

**Vegetation** - One photopoint was set up in the Floodplain Marsh/pasture to monitor landscape changes as a result of removal of grazing pressure and the restoration of the Kissimmee River.

**Wildlife** - Wildlife observations are recorded during site visits and a data base set up to track observations.

### **3. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and protection of Water Resources:**

All of the attributes of free flowing rivers, including attenuation of flood discharges, providing year round base flows, water quality improvement and wildlife habitat, were lost when Canal 38 was excavated. District ownership of the historic flood plain is necessary if restoration of the river is to be accomplished.

### **4. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

The Kissimmee River stretched over 98 miles between Lake Kissimmee and Lake Okeechobee. With the Construction of Canal 38 the River became a straight line 56 miles with remnant oxbows in various places. More than 47,000 acres of wetlands were altered by the construction. The proposed restoration alternative will re-establish prechannelization hydrologic characteristics along 52 miles of river channel and within 24,000 acres of flood plain.

There is additional potential in portions of the river other than the targeted restoration. In 1990, a restoration of a

slough in Rattlesnake Hammock was completed. This project has resulted in reflooding nearly 500 acres of lands that were previously wetlands.

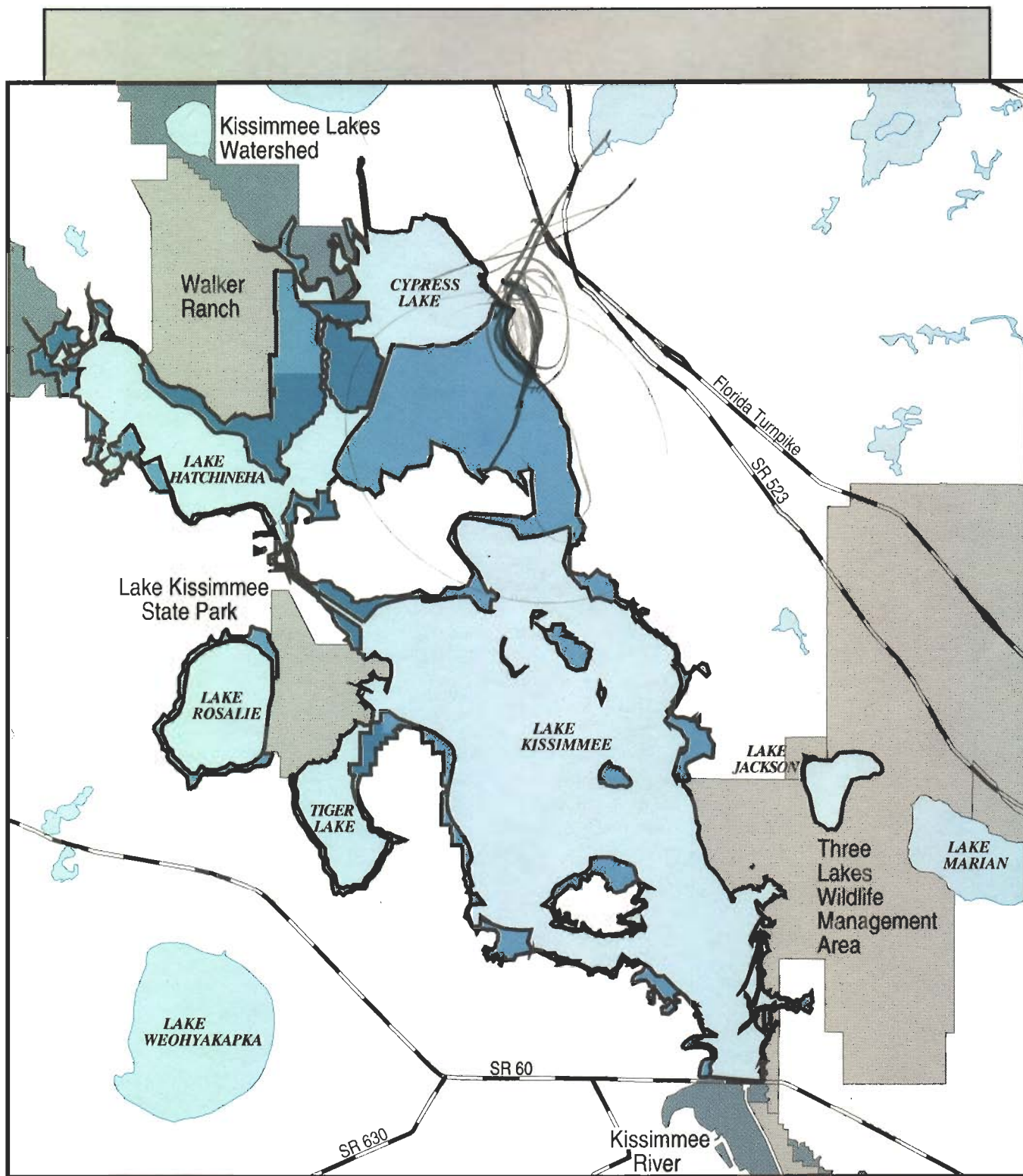
### **5. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**



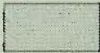

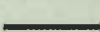
Management of lands in the Kissimmee Valley will be time and manpower intensive. Prior to beginning restoration, control of shrubs and exotic plants will be needed. Vegetation management will be required on each property. Security for acquired lands is important. Blocking the numerous drainage ways and restoring sheetflow into the flood plain will be a major task. Even if other organizations are willing to manage the lands, the District will still be responsible for hydrologic restoration. Given the size of the project, this will be a large and ongoing venture.

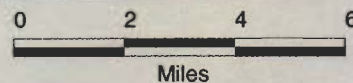
### **6. Public Recreation:**

Existing recreational activities consist primarily of power boating and fishing in Canal 38, and those oxbows of the river that were not cut off as a result of project construction. There are opportunities for bank fishing and picnicking at several access sites along the river. Improvement of flows into the river oxbows will increase the opportunities for fishing, canoeing, nature observation and waterfowl hunting. Thirty-six (36) miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail were dedicated in 1991 at a joint ceremony held by the District, the Florida Trail Association (FTA), the USDA Forest Service, and the Avon Park Air Force Range. A section of trail on Hickory Hammock (formerly the McArthur Ranch tract) is open for use. Additional sections of the trail will be developed as contiguous parcels of land are acquired by the District. The long-range plan is to extend the trail the full length of the river.

<b>Counties:</b>	<b>Osceola, Polk, Okeechobee</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>81,132 Acres</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>30,385 Acres</b>
<b>Land Cost (SOR - only):</b>	<b>\$34,900,000</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost (SOR):</b>	<b>\$1,350</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>51,000 Acres</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>\$45,000,000</b>



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# Loxahatchee Slough

## 1. General Description

The Loxahatchee Slough is located in Palm Beach County, and covers nearly 13,000 acres. It contains a mixture of habitat types, including pine flatwoods, cypress forest, and wet prairie. The present land-use is native range. Some of the current landowners have long-range plans for urban development.

## 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

The lands included in this project are those that border the "Loxahatchee Corridor," which has been pledged for protection by the present landowner. The proposed project would provide additional watershed and upland buffer to the slough corridor. Public water supply potential does not appear to be significant; however, aquifer recharge does occur over the vast expanse of uplands and wetlands. This system is an important watershed for storing surface runoff and providing groundwater baseflow to Canal 18 and the Loxahatchee River.

The site contains a mosaic of habitats and lies in close proximity to several natural areas, including Jonathan Dickinson State Park, the Loxahatchee River SOR corridor, and the West Palm Beach Water Catchment Area. The mixture of upland and wetland communities provide

needed foraging and nesting sites for wildlife in an area undergoing rapid urban development.

## 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

The project area is in relatively good condition. Exotic vegetation is invading the site due to overdrainage on adjacent parcels. The exotics appear to be a controllable amount, but would require regular attention. Drainage swales and ditches exist, but not to a large degree. Hydrologic restoration could be accomplished by filling or blocking swales and ditches.

## 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

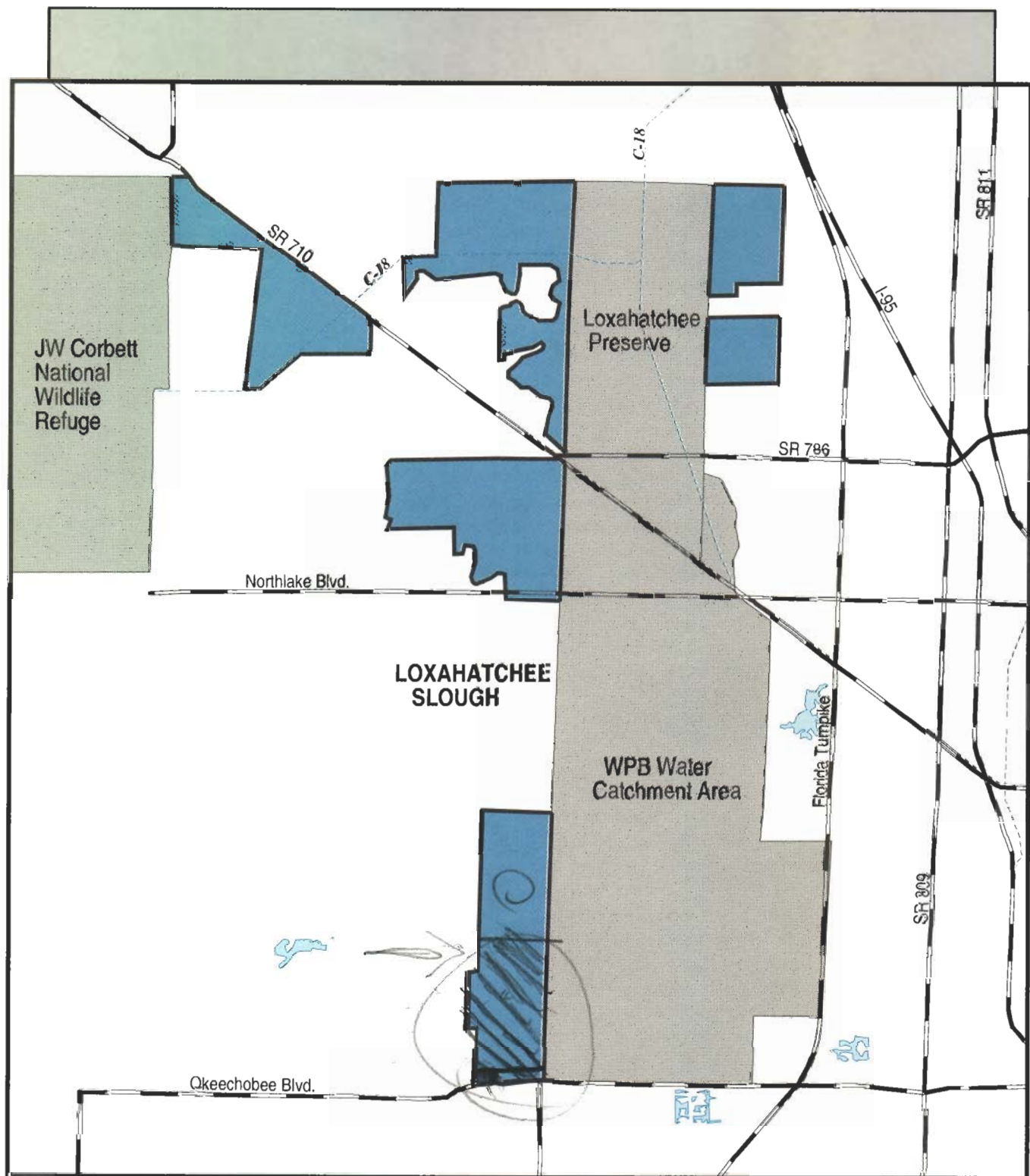
Palm Beach County has expressed an interest in cooperative management. Hydrologic restoration, exotic control, and prescribed burning all will be required, whoever manages the tract.

## 5. Recreation Potential:

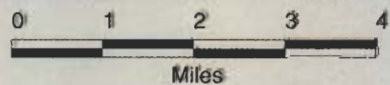
Its proximity to a large metropolitan area lend this area to heavy public use. Hiking and equestrian trails could be developed in conjunction with local citizen's groups. Environmental education would also be an expected use.

<b>Project County:</b>	<b>Palm Beach</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>13,000 Acres</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>\$36 Million</b>
<b>Number of Owners:</b>	<b>Numerous</b>





- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Area
- Other Conservation Area
- Other SOR Projects
- SOR Project Boundary



# M<sub>odel</sub> Lands Basins

## 1. General Description:

This project is located primarily in Dade County, with a very small portion on the edge of Monroe County. The FPL cooling ponds at Turkey Point nuclear power plant are not included in the project boundary.

The project area includes a variety of habitats, both freshwater and estuarine. The northwestern corner has been invaded by Australian pine and Brazilian pepper, but the great majority of the site is exotic-free. The majority of the tract is undisturbed fresh and salt water wetlands. The dominant freshwater habitat type is wet prairie, interspersed with tree islands. Vegetation includes red bay, dahoon holly, cocoplum and buttonbush in the freshwater upland islands, and red, white and black mangroves in the estuarine islands.

These lands form a contiguous habitat corridor with Everglades National Park, Southern Glades SOR project, Biscayne National Park, Crocodile Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, the north Key Largo CARL purchases, John Pennkamp State Park, and the existing National Marine Sanctuary.

## 2. Project Boundary Revisions:

In 1993, the District Governing Board approved the expansion of the project by adding 10,620 acres north and west of the existing project. The addition will serve as a hydrologic and environmental buffer between developed lands to the north and the existing project to the south.

Much of the northern and western parts of the addition have been disturbed in the past by agricultural activities. These have revegetated with a mixture of hardwood hammock, sawgrass glades, and Brazilian pepper. Exotics have invaded from the agricultural lands to the north and will be an ongoing maintenance challenge.

Water flow in northern and western areas appears to be affected by old farm roads, drainage ditches, existing roads and transmission line corridors. Local recharge to the Biscayne Aquifer occurs within this area, and also functions to maintain the salt barrier line to prevent saltwater intrusion. Recharge would be greatly diminished if urban or agricultural development were to take place. The site serves as a feeding area for numerous wading birds and raptors. It also provides habitat for large mammals, such as deer, panther and bobcat.

Numerous ditches, old roads, and trash piles are present. Controlling illegal dumping and exotic vegetation will be major land management tasks. Extensive ditch plugging may be necessary to restore sheetflow to the northern wetlands.

## 3. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

The sheet flow of water across this area provides high quality freshwater to the estuarine areas of Card Sound, Barnes Sound and Manatee Bay. Card Sound is classified as both an Aquatic Preserve and Outstanding Florida Water. This basin is a primary source of overland freshwater flow for Biscayne National Park and the southern portions of Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve.

This area functions as a recharge area for maintenance of the salt-barrier line thus serving an important function for the prevention of further saltwater intrusion into the region.

## 4. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

This area is habitat for many threatened and endangered species including: Florida panthers, American crocodiles, wood storks, the coast leather fern, and the silver palm. This area is federally designated as critical habitat for the American crocodile. Natural communities are still in excellent condition for the most part. In conjunction with the shoreline of Biscayne National Park, this area forms the longest undeveloped strip of red mangroves on the east coast of Florida. The project is supported by the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Dade County.

## 5. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

Exotic invasion in the northwest corner, and in the addition lands is severe. Dade County has indicated that this site would be a high priority area for treatment of exotics as part of their off-site mitigation program.

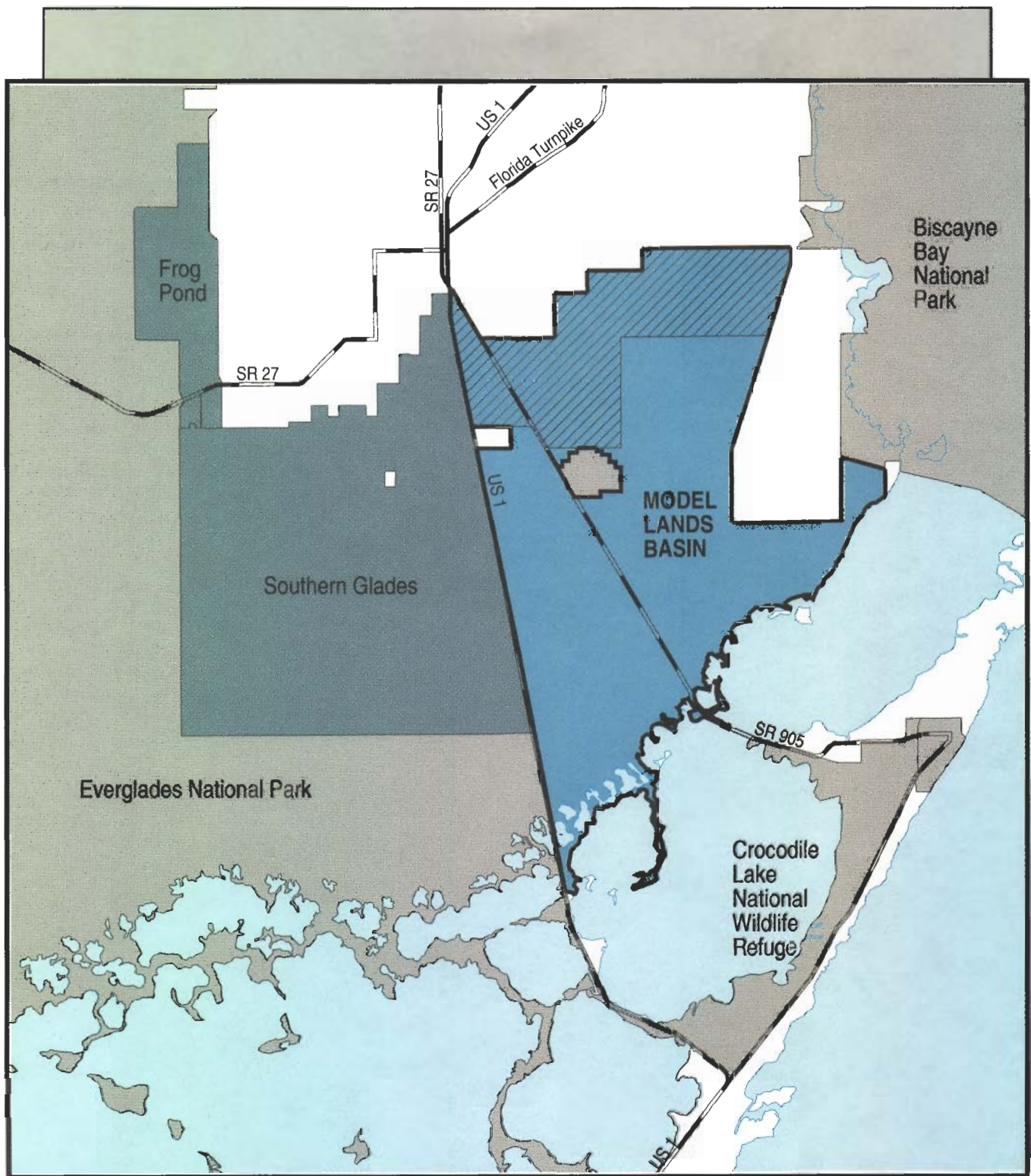
Dade County has a funding source for partial management, through the County's Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Trust Fund, which could include exotic plant treatment and hydrologic restoration.

## 6. Recreation Potential:

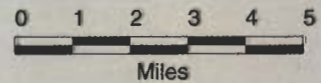
This tract is surprisingly open and, for the dedicated hiker, would provide the opportunity to explore a rather unique part of Florida. There is excellent opportunity for use of the extensive shoreline, by boaters and fishermen.

<b>County:</b>	<b>Dade/Monroe</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>41,620 Acres</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>\$30 Million</b>
<b>Number of Owners:</b>	<b>Numerous</b>





- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Area
- 1994 Project Additions
- Other Conservation Area
- Other SOR Projects
- SOR Project Boundary





# North Savannas

## 1. General Description:

The site contains a 900 acre remnant of the historic savannas community type in St. Lucie County. It is completely separated from the Savannas State Preserve by the City of Ft. Pierce. St. Lucie County owns two adjacent tracts, totalling 353 acres, which were purchased as mitigation for expansion of the St. Lucie County Airport.

## 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and the Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

Important water management functions of the site include attenuating peak discharges and improving water quality. The site promotes recharge to the surficial Aquifer, which is the primary source of potable water in St. Lucie County.

## 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

The site is in relatively good condition; however, numerous shellrock roads cross an old platted portion. Removal of the old roads would probably benefit sheetflow.

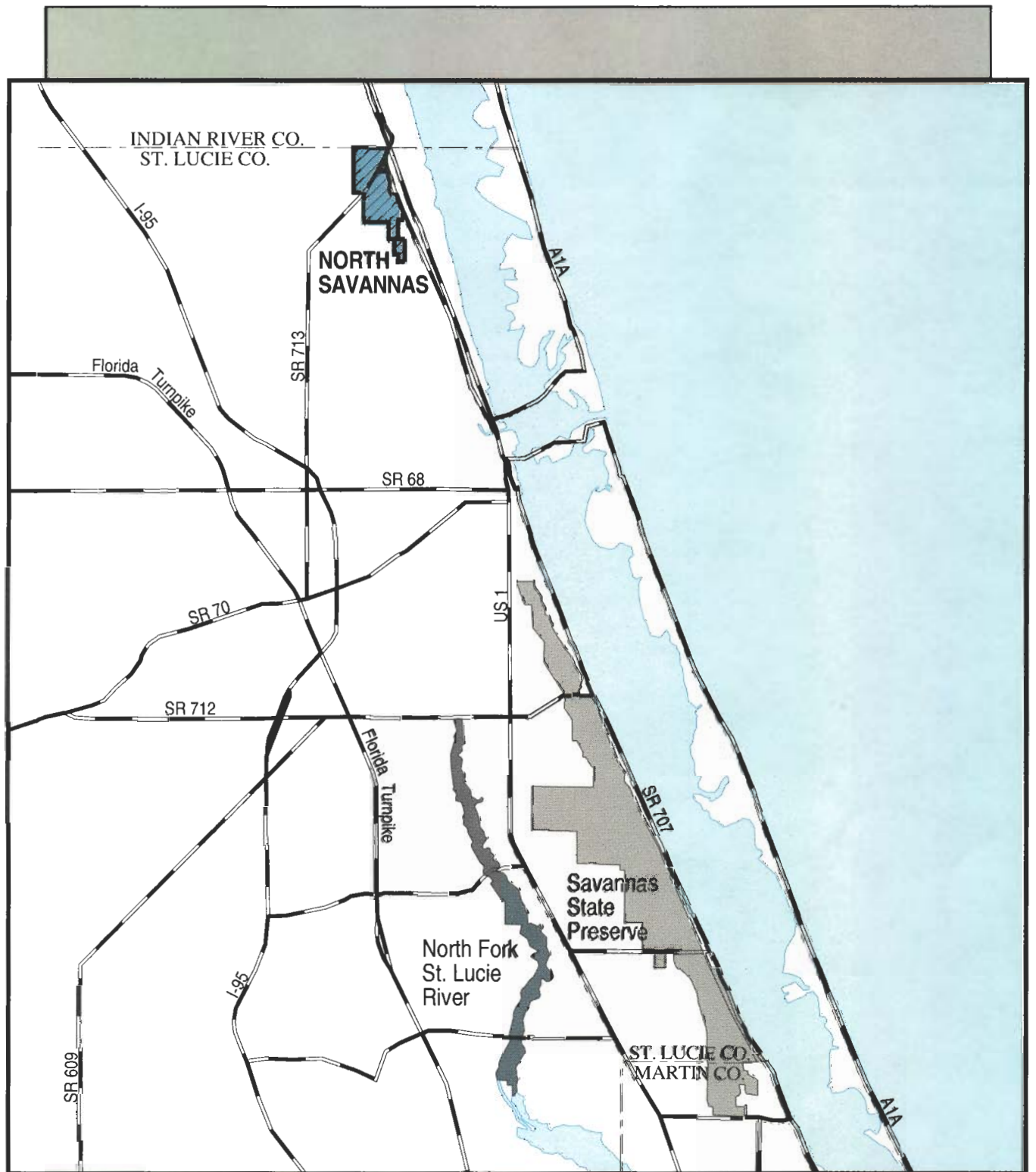
## 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:







The site is very accessible, which may prove to be a security problem. Prescribed burning of the flatwoods would be difficult, due to the dense residential development immediately to the west and US Highway I to the east. Exotic vegetation is not a major problem at the present, but the area will require periodic checking and treatment.

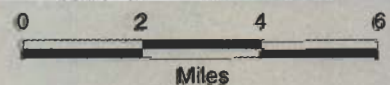
## 5. Recreation Potential:

The site would be very suitable for hiking trails. Due to its proximity to a major metropolitan area, use of the property would probably be very high. The diversity of community types makes this area particularly appealing. Fishing in the deep water areas would be very popular.

<b>Project County:</b>	<b>St. Lucie</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>900 acres</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>\$5 Million</b>
<b>Number of Owners:</b>	<b>Numerous</b>



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  1994 Project Additions
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary







### 1. General Description

Pal-Mar is located in Palm Beach and Martin Counties, east of J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area (WMA). In 1991, the District Governing Board approved the addition of 4500 acres to the project. The addition includes those lands which separate Pal-Mar from Jonathan Dickinson State Park. Acquisition of the addition would form an extensive wildlife corridor connecting J.D. State Park, Pal-Mar, Corbett W.M.A., and DuPuis State Forest.

### 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

The extensive wetlands in this project provide significant conservation of surface water resources. The aquifer under the Pal-Mar area may be expected to have slow recharge due to 15-25 feet of confining sands near the surface. The estimated transmissivity shows the aquifer is adequate for small-scale development and individual use.

### 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Pal-Mar contains the largest concentration of contiguous wetlands in Martin County. Habitat diversity is relatively

low, since all that exists are pine flatwoods mixed with wet prairies. However, the quality of habitat is very good. It scores high for connectedness because it is only separated from Corbett Wildlife Management Area by SR 710.

If permits could be obtained to drain the area, the development pressure would be very high since it is sub-divided into many small parcels. If a wellfield were developed in the area, it could have severe environmental impacts, as the confining layer is inadequate to protect wetlands from leakage.

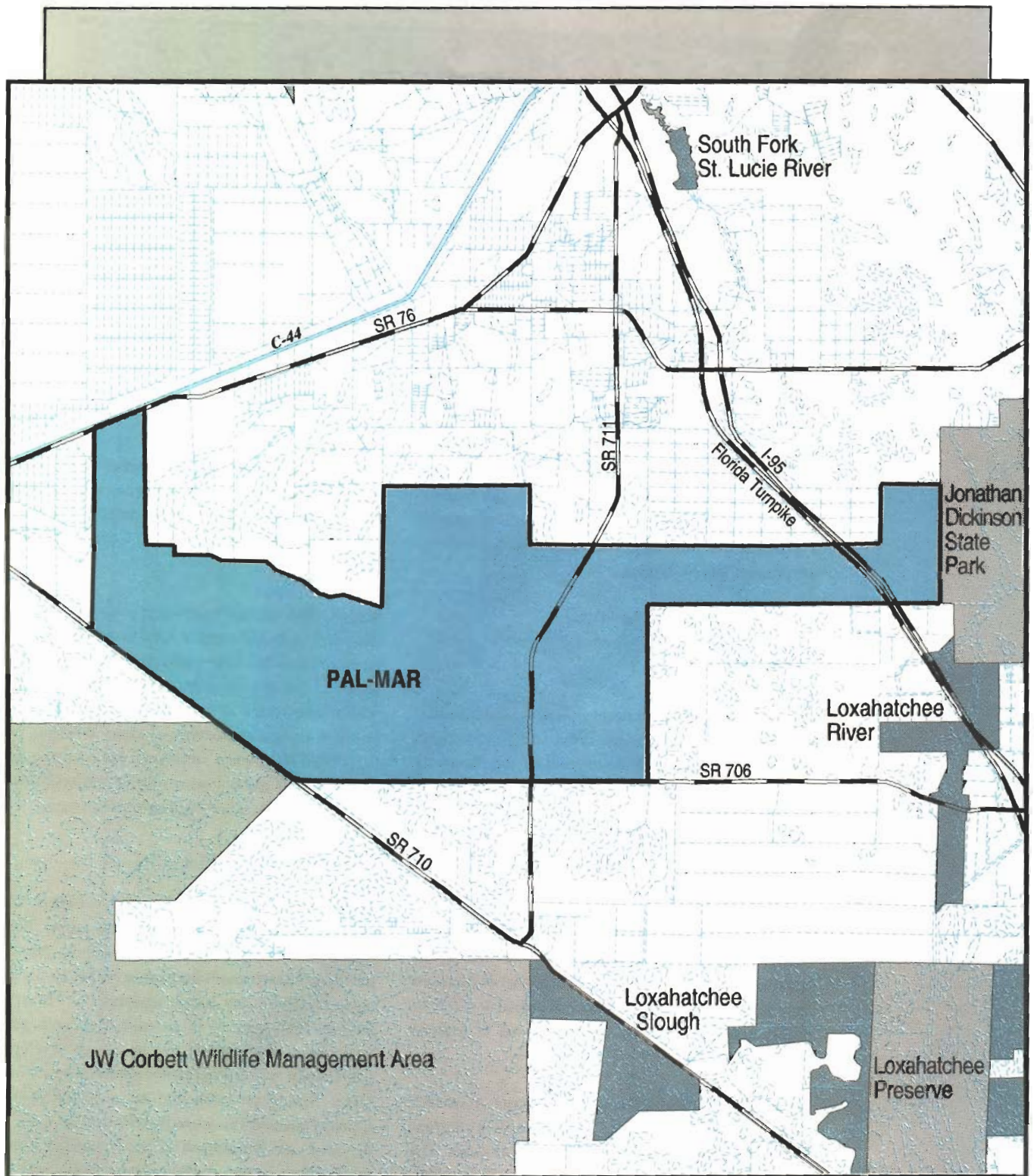
### 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:


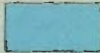



The management of the area would probably depend on the type and amount of public activity allowed. It has been used for some trash dumping and controllable infestations of exotic vegetation are present.

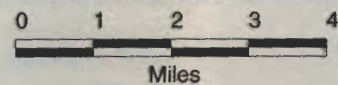
### 5. Recreation Potential:

Recreational use would probably be high, particularly if it is used as a wildlife management area like the Corbett Wildlife Management Area. Several deepwater canals remain from earlier attempts to drain the property. Since these have no positive outfall, they provide good fishing.

<b>Counties:</b>	<b><i>Palm Beach and Martin</i></b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b><i>27,500 Acres</i></b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b><i>\$45.5 Million</i></b>
<b>Number of Owners:</b>	<b><i>Numerous</i></b>



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# Six Mile Cypress II

## 1. General Description

Six Mile Cypress Slough occupies approximately 2000 acres in Lee County, southeast of the City of Ft. Myers. It extends from State Road 82 southwesterly for approximately nine miles to Ten Mile Canal. The slough averages 1,500 feet in width. This project (Six Mile Cypress II), locally known as the "North Arm", covers approximately 225 acres and appears to be a transitional arm of the main slough. It extends to the east for approximately two miles and varies in width from 400' - 1000'. The arm collects runoff from the north and areas east of I-75. Box culverts under the interstate direct runoff through the arm and into the main strand of Six Mile Cypress. The slough consists of cypress swamp, interspersed with numerous open ponds. It is fringed with pine flatwoods, transitional hardwoods, wet prairies, and Melaleuca.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities:

### A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Lee County has agreed to develop, operate and maintain the slough as a nature preserve under an agreement with the District. A detailed description of the slough is contained in the Six Mile Cypress Slough Management Plan prepared by the County in 1986. Specific actions to implement the plan are set forth in the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Land & Water Management Plan prepared by the County and approved by the District in 1988.

Six Mile Cypress Basin is being studied as part of the Lee County Surface Water Management Master Plan. It will recommend design criteria to prevent further degradation and slough enhancement. A principal objective will be to restore a more natural hydroperiod to aid in wetland revitalization.

The District, through its local Government Assistance Program, is working with Lee County to develop a Surface Water Management Master Plan for Six Mile Basin. The plan will propose management strategies, such as revitalization of flow ways, to restore flows to the North Arm and main strand of the slough.

Melaleuca and Brazilian pepper are problem exotics that have proliferated in certain portions of the slough. Native vegetation has been completely replaced by Melaleuca in approximately 200 acres. A vigorous eradication/control program involving chemical and mechanical applications is planned to halt the future spread of these species. Reforestation with native species will be undertaken where large stands of exotics are removed.

### B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

The entire perimeter of the slough is being posted to prevent unauthorized access, and problem areas are being fenced and/or barricaded. Routine patrol will be provided by preserve personnel and the Lee County Sheriff's Department.

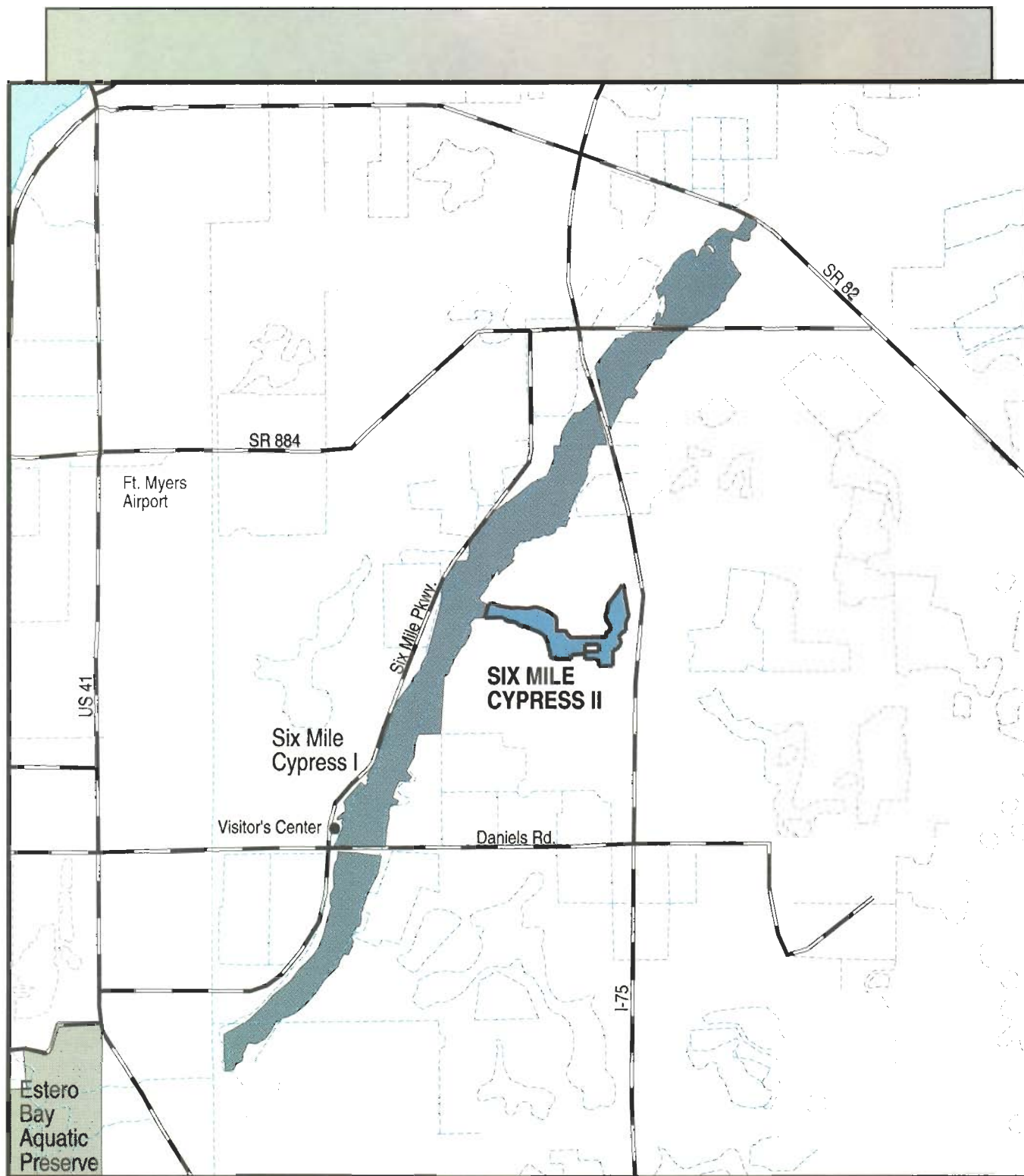
A prescribed burning program is proposed for the pine flatwoods north of Penzance Road to maintain the species composition of this community and prevent the buildup of fuels that could result in damaging wildfires. Fire lanes will be constructed to facilitate the burns and to protect sensitive cypress and hardwood areas. Wildfires will be suppressed only when considered necessary to protect adjacent lands and highway travel or when preserve resources would be subject to irreparable damage.





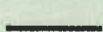
### C. Public Recreation:

The slough has been used informally for both active and passive recreational activities for many years. The continuation of passive activities, such as fishing, picnicking, photography and nature observation, will be encouraged in appropriate locations within the preserve. Interpretive facilities consisting of an elevated boardwalk, covered amphitheater and parking area have been developed by Lee County to enhance visitor appreciation of the preserve. Special programs will be conducted by the Lee County Parks and Recreation Department. The Lee County School Board Department of Environmental Education will continue its past practice of conducting field trips to the slough.

County:	Lee
Total Project Area:	225 Acres <sup>1</sup>
Estimated Assessed Value:	\$2,000,000
Number of Owners:	Multiple

<sup>1</sup> See Six Mile Cypress I



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary

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Miles





# South Fork St. Lucie River

## I. General Description:

This project includes a portion of the upper reach of the South Fork St. Lucie River, commencing approximately 0.75 miles south of State Road 76 and extending approximately 1.25 miles southward. The project was proposed by the citizens of Martin County to preserve and protect this relatively undisturbed portion of the river for the use and enjoyment of existing and future generations.

In 1993, Martin County submitted an application to Florida Communities Trust (FCT) for the joint acquisition of 37 additional acres adjacent to, and immediately north of, the 100 acre SOR tract. FCT has informed Martin County that their application has been approved. Activities are now under way so that negotiations with the land owners can begin.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities:

### A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition

The productivity of the St. Lucie Estuary is dependent upon both the quantity and quality of water entering the river. There is evidence that adjacent land-use activities have altered the natural hydrologic regime, resulting in changes in the density and species composition of the hydric-hammock along this reach of the river.

A conceptual management plan covering the river corridor has been prepared by Martin County, in consultation with the District. The purpose of the plan is to preserve and enhance the condition of this reach through a combination of land acquisition, land use regulation, and public use management. The effective implementation of development guidelines and regulations for private properties within, and immediately adjoining, the corridor will be critical to the success of this effort.

A boundary fence along the west side of the District's property has been constructed and posted to prevent unauthorized access from areas to the west. The Martin County Sheriff's office will provide regular patrols to those areas accessible by vehicle.

### B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner

The vegetative communities of the South Fork property were mapped by a student intern in 1993. Vegetation monitoring plots have been established in the scrubby flatwood community to evaluate District management activities. A permanent photo point accompanies the vegetation plots, and will provide visual documentation of changes that occur. Wildlife observations that are made during data collection visits are being entered into a wildlife data base to track long-term wildlife observations.

Prescribed burn plans were developed and fire lines were established in anticipation of conducting winter burns during 1993. The close proximity of SR 76 and I-95 require very exact weather conditions before burning can be undertaken. Conditions which met those in the fire prescriptions did not occur; therefore, no prescribed burning was done. Attempts will be made to burn in 1994.

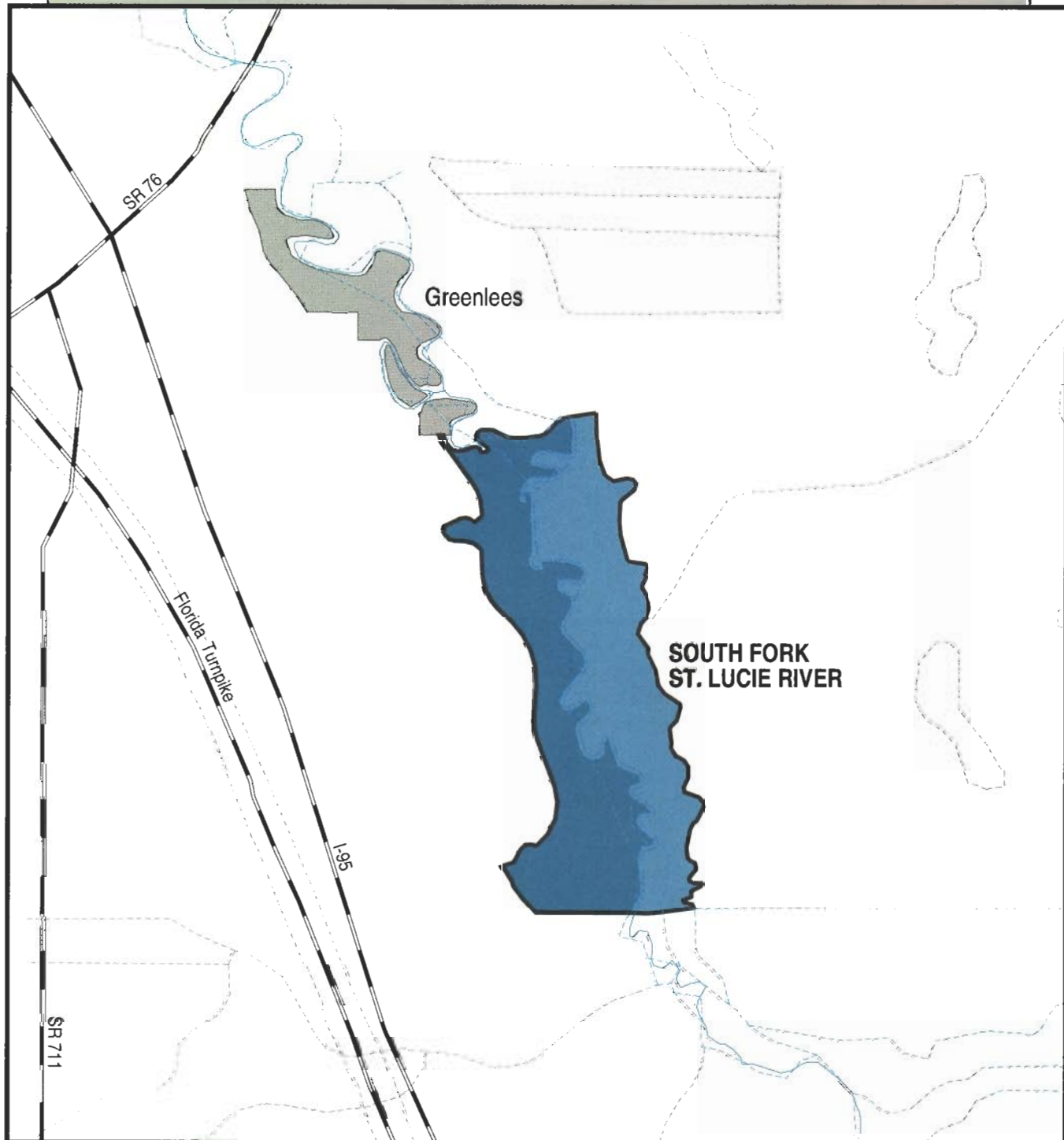
### C. Public Recreation






This reach of the river is quite scenic and has been used rather infrequently in the past by canoeists and fishermen. Martin County maintains a small boat access site near State Road 76. Additionally, an upland site on the west side of the river has been used by the Boy Scouts.

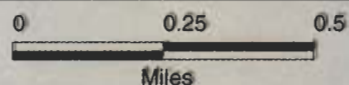
A hiking trail is being developed in cooperation with the Florida Trail Association. Blazing and clearing of the trail was completed in 1993. A bulletin board and registration desk were installed at the canoe landing/picnic area. Several small bridges remain to be constructed.

County:	Martin
Total Project Area:	184 Acres
Acres Acquired:	100
Land Cost:	\$2,000,000
Per Acre Cost:	\$20,000
Acres Remaining:	84
Estimated Assessed Value:	\$250,000

\*Acreage is inclusive of the Everglades Nutrient Removal Project.



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# Southern Glades (Canal-111)

## 1. General Description:

The lands in this project lie adjacent to the Canal-111, east of Everglades National Park, west of U.S. Highway 1, and south of S.R. 27. The project will benefit the flow of water into Everglades National Park and Northeast Florida Bay.

## 2. Project Boundary Revision

In 1993, the District Governing Board approved the addition of 7,533 acres to the project. Much of the northern portion of the addition, which serves as a buffer to the agricultural area to the north, is heavily infested with exotic vegetation. However, Florida panthers are reported to use the exotic - infested buffer lands.

Acquisition and protection of the Southern Glades addition will help maintain sheetflow into southeastern Everglades National Park and northeast Florida Bay, contributing to the survival of both freshwater and marine communities. Protection of this area is consistent with the Everglades SWIM Plan and the development of strategies to better disperse stormwater discharge impacts to coastal resources, and to improve freshwater flows to Everglades National Park.

Some hydrologic restoration will be necessary in the form of constructing ditch plugs and removing berms. Several unimproved roads cross the addition lands which present barriers to sheetflow and should be degraded. Controlling illegal dumping and exotic vegetation will be ongoing management challenges.

Dade County has a funding source for future restoration, through the County's Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Trust Fund. These funds may be available for exotic plant control and hydrologic restoration.

## 3. Land Stewardship Activities

### A. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Stands of native vegetation within Southern Glades were severely impacted by Hurricane Andrew. In wetland areas, coastal plain willow appears to be the dominant species following the storm. On disturbed sites, Brazilian pepper invasion is extensive.

Exotic control efforts were undertaken along the rights-of-way of Canals 109, 110, and 111 by SFWMD personnel from Homestead Field Station and Vegetation Management Division. GFC personnel treated exotics within the interior of the project. A long-term survey of herptile species in this area is continuing. Data from this project will be compared to others to help examine herpetofauna diversity and relative abundance.

### B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

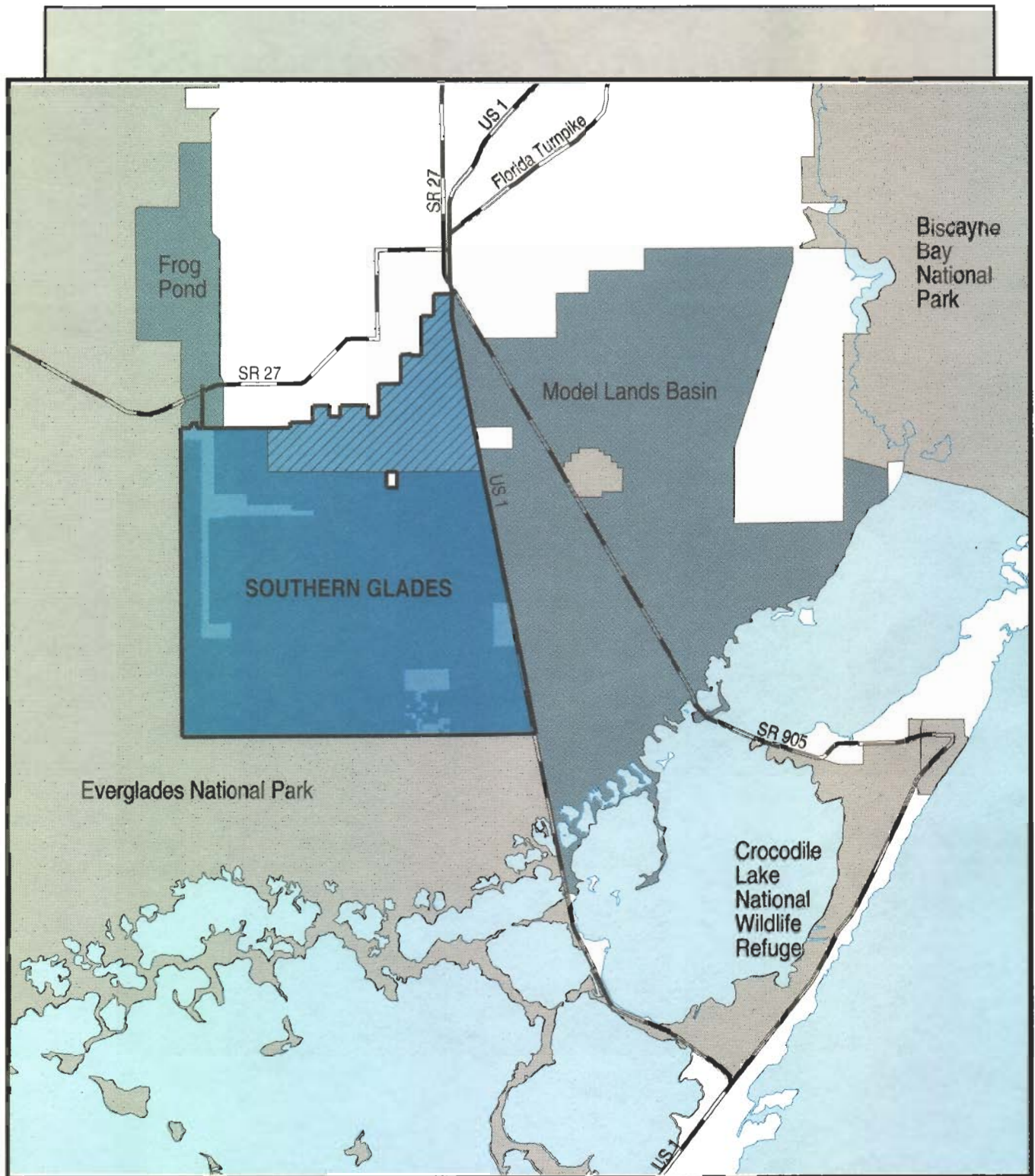
Lands purchased to date are being managed by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (GFC) as the Southern Glades Wildlife and Environmental Area (SGWEA) under an agreement with the District. The District provides supplementary funding for the employment of a full-time biologist by the GFC. A conceptual management plan has been prepared for SGWEA, and recommendations call for maintaining the area in as pristine a condition as possible.







### C. Public Recreation:

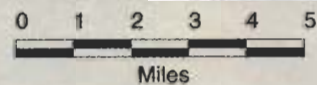
SGWEA is open to boats with outboard motors. Fishing, sightseeing, and environmental education are the principal public recreation uses of the Southern Glades.

Southern Glades Wildlife and Environmental Area was opened for hunting in 1992. Permitted game animals included, deer, migratory birds and frogs.

County:	Dade
Total Project Area:	37,510 Acres
Acres Acquired:	28,157
Land Cost:	\$7,104,214
Per Acre Cost:	\$252
Acres Remaining:	9,359
Estimated Assessed Value:	\$18 Million



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  1994 Project Additions
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary







# Stormwater Treatment Areas

## 1. General Description

The Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) are filter marshes which will naturally remove nutrients from the stormwater runoff exiting the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), and prior to the water entering the Everglades Protection Area (EPA). Construction of the STAs has been mandated by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Everglades Protection Act, the settlement of the Everglades lawsuit and the District's Everglades SWIM Plan and is the key to the improvement of the water quality in the Everglades.

Five STAs are currently proposed under the Everglades clean-up plan, with each serving the area tributary to the primary agricultural drainage canals of the EAA, which are the West Palm Beach (STA-1), Hillsboro (STA-2), North New River (STA-3 and 4) and Miami Canals (STA-5). The STAs locations were selected to maximize the District's ability to use the existing network of canals and water control structures to most efficiently intercept the nutrient-laden stormwater flows. The exact size and location of STAs are continuing to be refined, according to the needs of the restoration plan.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities

### *A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:*

The STAs will be designed, operated and managed to filter out harmful nutrients contained in stormwater runoff before this water enters the Water Conservation Areas, including the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and Everglades National Park. The size and location of the STAs will allow significant improvements in the manner in which water flows to natural areas by allowing the reintroduction of sheet flow into tens of thousands of acres of the Everglades.

### *B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner*

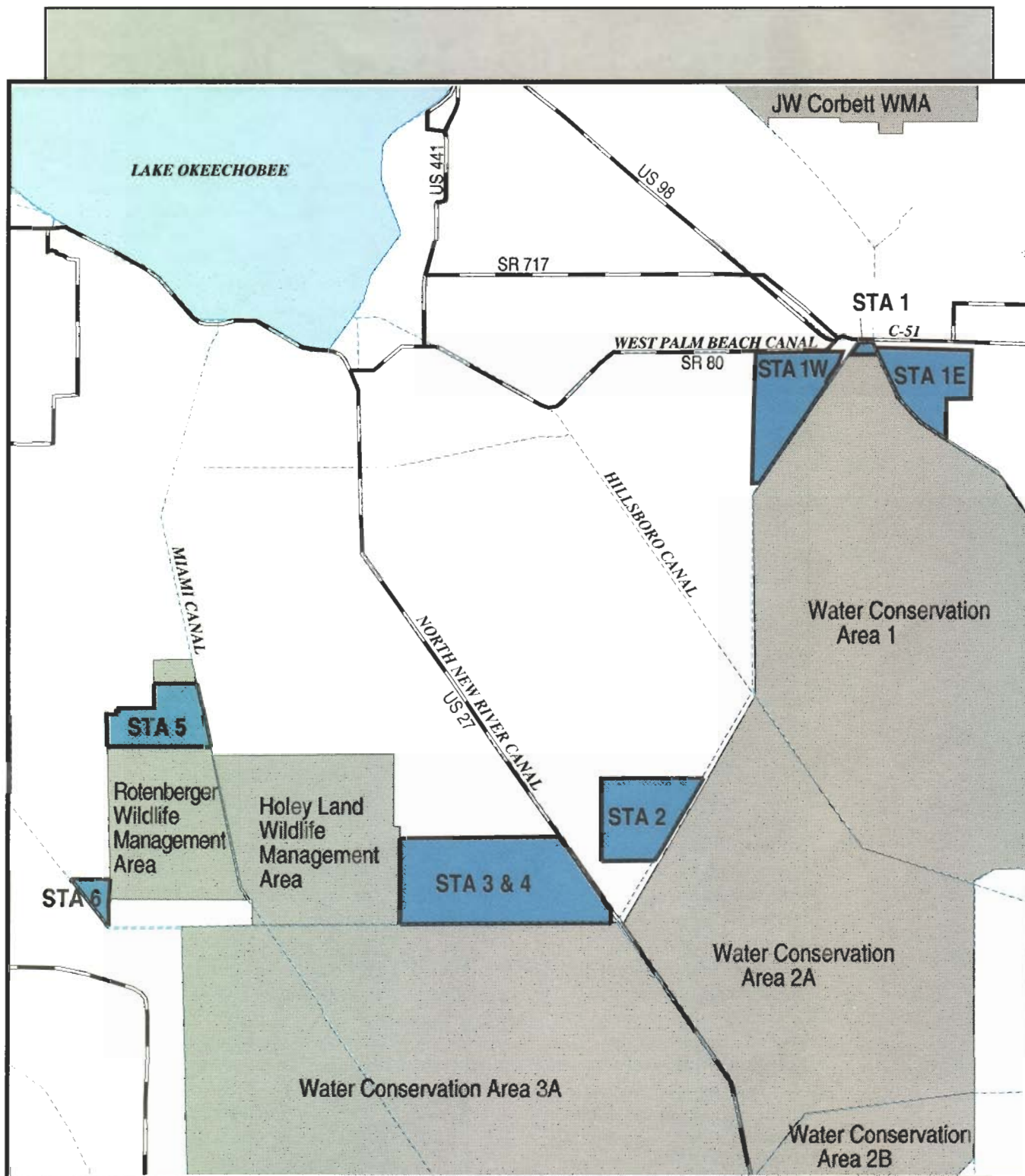
The STAs will be subject to intense management and monitoring in order to maximize their nutrient removal performance. Additionally, the District is considering various options to prevent unauthorized entry and trespassing.

### *C. Public Recreation*

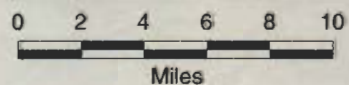
Public use and recreation on the STA lands will be examined in the planning and design process. Parcels will be evaluated for resource value and public use potential. Potential public uses will also be examined for their effect on environmental sensitivity and water management values of the lands.

*\* Acreage is inclusive  
of the Everglades Nutrient Removal Project.*

<i>County:</i>	<i>Palm Beach</i>
<i>Total Project Area:</i>	<i>44,500 Acres*</i>
<i>Estimated Assessed Value:</i>	<i>\$100 million</i>
<i>Number of Owners:</i>	<i>Numerous</i>



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Area
- Other Conservation Area
- Other SOR Projects
- SOR Project Boundary





# Upper Lakes Basin Watershed

(Formerly Kissimmee Lakes Watershed)

## 1. General Description:

The project area includes a substantial portion of the Reedy Creek and Lake Marion Creek drainage basins. The property contains expanses of improved pasture, pine flatwoods, bay swamp, wet prairies and scattered patches of xeric oak.

Reedy Creek Swamp is an extensive area of mixed hardwood/cypress swamp running for nearly 25 miles through western Osceola County, from the boundary of the Reedy Creek Improvement District, to Cypress Lake. It includes the Huckleberry Islands and totals more than 30,000 acres.

Lake Marion Creek is located in Polk County and flows from Lake Marion north and then southeasterly to Lake Hatchineha. The project area totals approximately 17,300 acres, 3,800 acres of which are within the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). It includes the 1,324 acre Horse Creek Scrub, designated for possible acquisition under the CARL program, and the Snell Creek Drainage Basin.

Walker Ranch was previously identified as potential acquisition area. This property encompasses approximately 8,500 acres in Osceola and Polk Counties and borders on Lake Russell, Reedy Creek and Lake Hatchineha. Disney Development, Inc. acquired Walker Ranch and has arranged for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to manage the land. This is to be mitigation for wetland destruction that will occur from future Disney development.

Disney has proposed to fund a stewardship program, to be undertaken by TNC, as well as conduct wetland restoration to mitigate the wetland impacts resulting from their development. Disney will also fund an annuity to provide a perpetual monetary source for management.

Management and mitigation plans have been prepared to direct the long term management activities, as well as guide the restoration activities that will be conducted to satisfy Disney's mitigation requirements.

## 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

Portions of Walker Ranch lie within the flood plain of Reedy Creek and Lake Hatchineha, and the property's

uplands serve as contributory watersheds. Significant recharge to the Floridan Aquifer from the property is likely, although detailed groundwater information is not currently available.

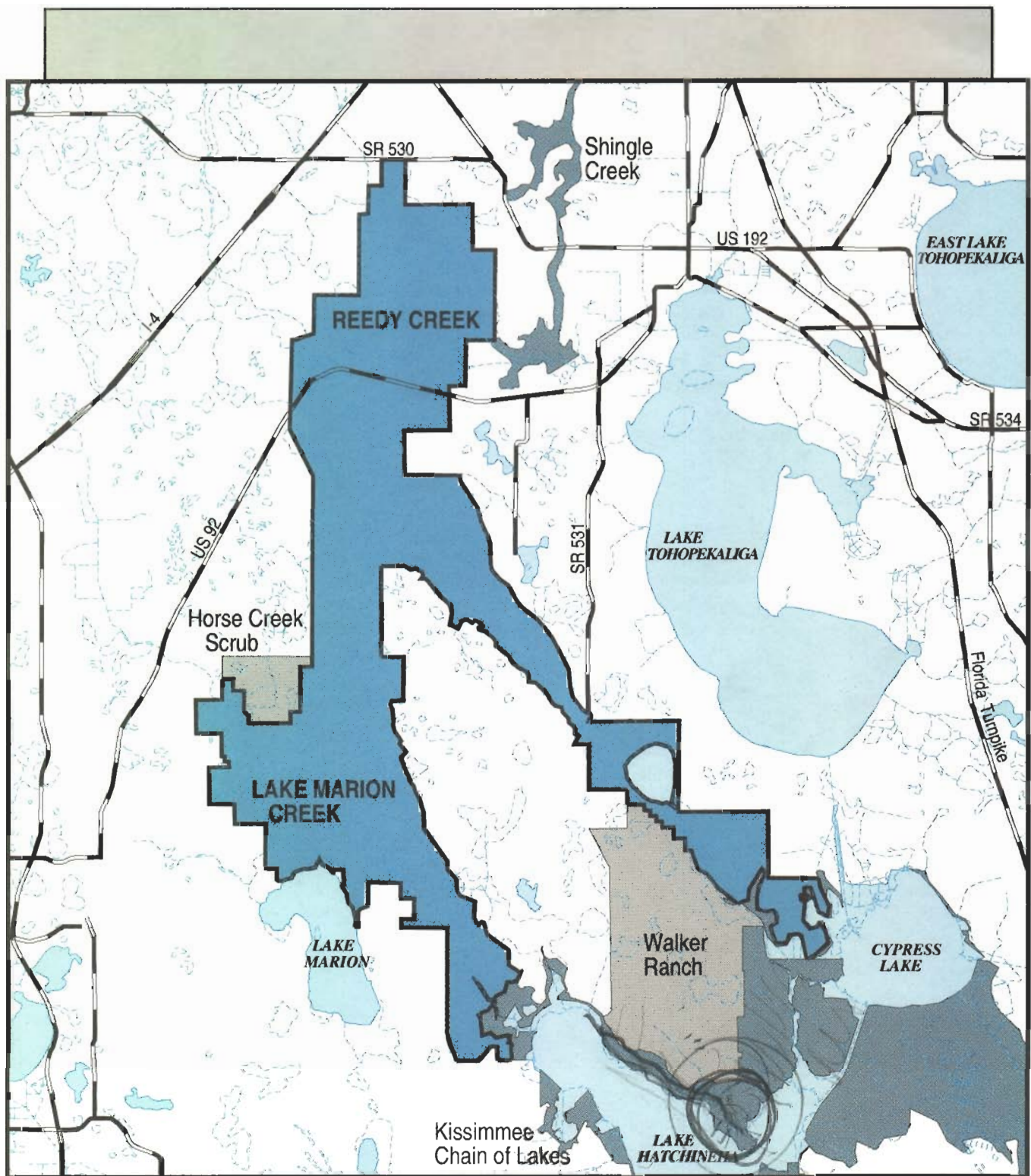
Reedy Creek serves as the headwaters for Lake Russell and Cypress Lake. Peak discharges from major storm events are modified and stored within the swamp and provide year-round base flow for downstream lakes. The flood plain provides recharge to the Surficial Aquifer, which in turn recharges the Intermediate and Floridan Aquifers. The Floridan Aquifer is the major source of groundwater for large-scale wellfield development in the area, and the Surficial and Intermediate Aquifers provide water for individual, domestic and small-scale irrigation use.

Wetlands comprise approximately 50% of the Lake Marion Creek portion of the project, and most are within the 100 year flood plain. The area consists of two distinct physiographic regions - the Lake Wales Ridge and the Osceola Plain. Contained within the Lake Wales Ridge and the Osceola Plain. The area is of critical importance to the recharge of the Floridan Aquifer because the sand allows water to infiltrate, rather than run off, and the many sinkholes and sinkhole lakes provide a more direct route for water to enter the aquifer. The water quality of Lake Marion is very good, and the lake serves as the headwaters for Lake Marion Creek. Snell and Lake Marion Creek provide a constant supply of high quality water to Lake Hatchineha which in turn discharges to Lake Kissimmee, the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee. All three lakes are priority water bodies under the SWIM Program.

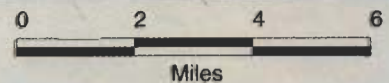
## 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Reedy Creek Swamp has been fairly well protected due to its large size and inaccessibility. Unless high density urban encroachments or damaging silvicultural operations are permitted in the future, the swamp should be able to buffer itself. Exotic vegetation is not a problem at this time, and it does not appear that hydrologic restoration will be necessary. Security and poaching may be a problem due to the extended boundary and the close proximity of paved roads.

The Lake Marion Creek properties have a number habitat types, including riverine swamps, isolated marshes, pine flatwoods and sand pine scrub. Several rare, threatened and endangered species inhabit the basin, including bald eagles, scrub jays, squirrels and gopher tortoises. The natural habitats within the Lake Marion Creek area are generally in good condition although some scrub areas



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Area
- Other Conservation Area
- Other SOR Projects
- SOR Project Boundary





have been destroyed through land development activities. Exotic vegetation is not a problem, and hydrologic restoration will not be a major requirement. The size of the property and the deep swamps allow the interior portions to remain buffered from activities along the ridge. A security program will be required to prevent unauthorized activities.

#### **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

A management plan was prepared for Walker Ranch by TNC in 1992, which describes management needs, as well as proposed actions. The plan emphasizes prescribed burning, exotic plant control, and security. Save Our Rivers staff prepared a combined conceptual management plan for the Lake Marion/Reedy Creek portions of the project. The plan addresses general management needs, including prescribed burning, exotic control, security, and restoration of native plant communities.

#### **5. Recreation Potential:**

Recreational opportunities are discussed in both the Walker Ranch and Lake Marion/Reedy Creek Management Plans. At this time, it is anticipated that recreation

will be centered around passive uses, such as hiking and canoe trails, with the possibility of equestrian trail development on Walker Ranch.

Reedy Creek could become a popular canoeing area with selective removal of deadfalls and overhanging growth from the creek. Some periodic aquatic weed control may also be necessary. The swamp is very dense and access would be limited primarily to canoes and foot traffic. An interpretive boardwalk, nature trail and an environmental education center operated by the Osceola County School Board are located on the east side of the creek off Poinciana Boulevard. A system of footpaths could be developed to provide opportunities for hiking, nature observation and photography. A multi-agency cooperative effort will be necessary to manage this extensive system properly.

Portions of Lake Marion Creek are currently accessible to fishermen, and travel by canoe is possible during high-water conditions. Selective clearing of deadfalls and overhanging growth and the installation of trail markers would facilitate canoeing. A system of footpaths within the swamp corridor and adjacent areas of scrub and flatwoods would facilitate access to the property for hiking, nature observation and photography.







# Water Conservation Areas

## 1. General Description

The three Water Conservation Areas (WCA's) are part of the original Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project to provide water supply and flood control to South Florida. The SOR project is designed to complete the public acquisition of outstanding land interests in order to protect this area's role in long-term water resource management. This acquisition was mandated in the original legislation for the Save Our Rivers Program.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities:

### A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

The District and the US Army Corps of Engineers have been regulating water levels in the three Water Conservation Areas, in accordance with criteria initially established in the 1950s and modified at various times over the years to meet changing conditions. The general purpose of the schedules is to provide for the storage of floodwater from developed areas adjacent to the WCAs for later use during the dry season. In establishing the schedules, consideration was given to the needs of wildlife indigenous to the WCAs and the requirements of emergent vegetation. Releases from the WCAs during the dry season and, particularly during drought conditions, are considered vital to the maintenance of adequate water levels in the coastal canals and wellfields and the prevention of saltwater intrusion. Flows from WCA 3 are essential to the well-being of Everglades National Park. The amount and manner of delivery of these flows has and continues to be the subject of intense public debate. Much work has been done to devise a system of delivery that most closely approximates historical patterns (See Canal-111 SOR Project discussions).

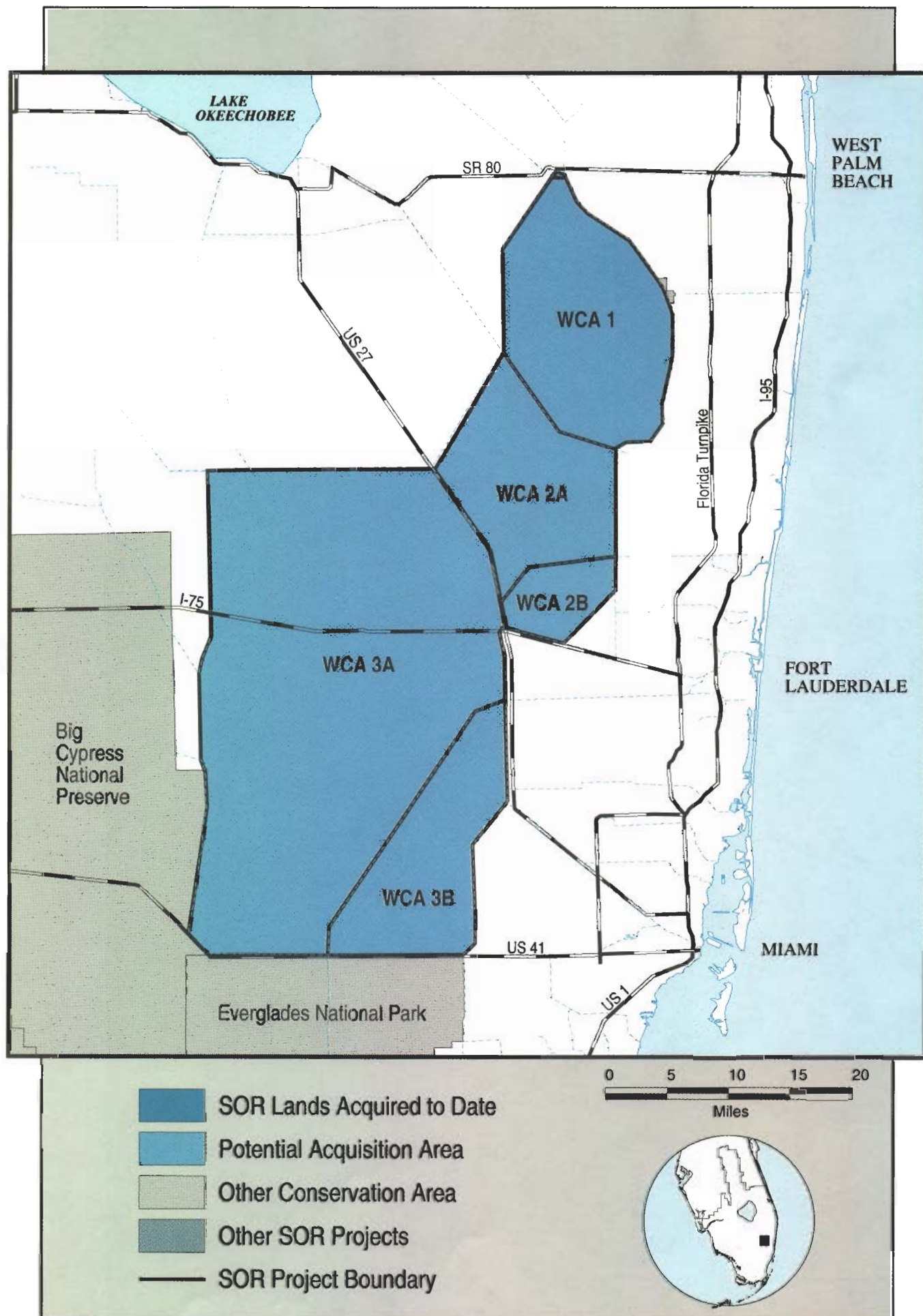
### B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

WCA 1 is managed as the Arthur R. Marshal Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). WCAs 2 and 3 are managed as the Everglades Wildlife Management Area by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (GFC) under separate cooperative and license agreements with the District. Both agencies have developed management plans and actively manage the fish and wildlife resources and public use of the areas under their charge. The District has been engaged in environmental research in the WCA for many years, concentrating on the effects of water quantity and quality on the biota. In recent years, efforts to halt backpumping into Lake Okeechobee have resulted in increased flows from the Everglades Agricultural Area into WCA 3 and this in turn appears to be triggering certain vegetative changes of concern to environmentalists. ENP officials have expressed concern that water quality problems appearing in WCA 3 will be translocated to ENP unless remedial action is taken. All parties are actively working to find acceptable solutions to this problem.

### C. Public Recreation:

The Water Conservation Areas are important outdoor recreation areas used heavily by the public for fishing, hunting, boating, frogging, and nature appreciation. Over the years, numerous recreation sites and facilities have been provided to facilitate public access. Site development has generally followed the recommendations set forth in two published recreational plans: RECREATION PLAN, THE AREA SOUTH OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE, prepared in 1960 for the District by the Florida Development Commission and RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVERGLADES WATER CONSERVATION AREAS: FIVE YEAR PLAN 1973-1978, prepared in 1974 by the Everglades Recreational Planning Board. Both the USFWS and the GFC have established rules and regulations governing public-use of these areas.

Counties:	Dade, Broward and Palm Beach
Total Project Area:	256,000 Acres
Acres Acquired:	42,124
Land Cost:	\$7,943,552
Per Acre Cost:	\$189
Acres Remaining:	214,000
Estimated Assessed Value:	\$20,000,000



NOTE: SOR has Partial Ownership in the Water Conservation Areas.





## ***1994 Save Our Rivers - Five Year Plan***

***The goal of the Save Our Rivers Program is to acquire necessary interests in lands for water management, water supply, conservation and protection of water resources. Projects may be submitted by nearly any interested party. These lands are analyzed to determine the extent that each project meets the program objectives. Projects that are incorporated into the Five Year Plan are updated annually.***

***Projects included in the Five Year Plan will not necessarily be acquired. Acquisition is dependent upon the level of funding and a number of priority factors (see Policies 4.100, 5.001).***



# Dade Broward Levee

## 1. General Description

The property is located directly north of the Tamiami Canal (Canal-4), with Levee 30/US 27 forming the western boundary and the Dade Broward Levee the eastern boundary.

## 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

The project provides water supply benefits by maintaining groundwater levels to the east and may help support proposed wellfields. The land lies within the cone of influence of Dade County's Northwest Wellfields. The project is anticipated to have a positive impact upon the area designated as "urban water conservation area." The project also provides recharge to the Snapper Creek wellfield located south of Tamiami Trail and east of Florida's Turnpike.

## 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Dade County has shown interest in assisting to restore and maintain the property. They have added the land to the Dade County proposed acquisition list. Exotic invasion has occurred, primarily concentrated in the southern one-half of the property. Overdrainage by the Tamiami Canal has seriously degraded the southern portion. It is unlikely that this area could be restored.

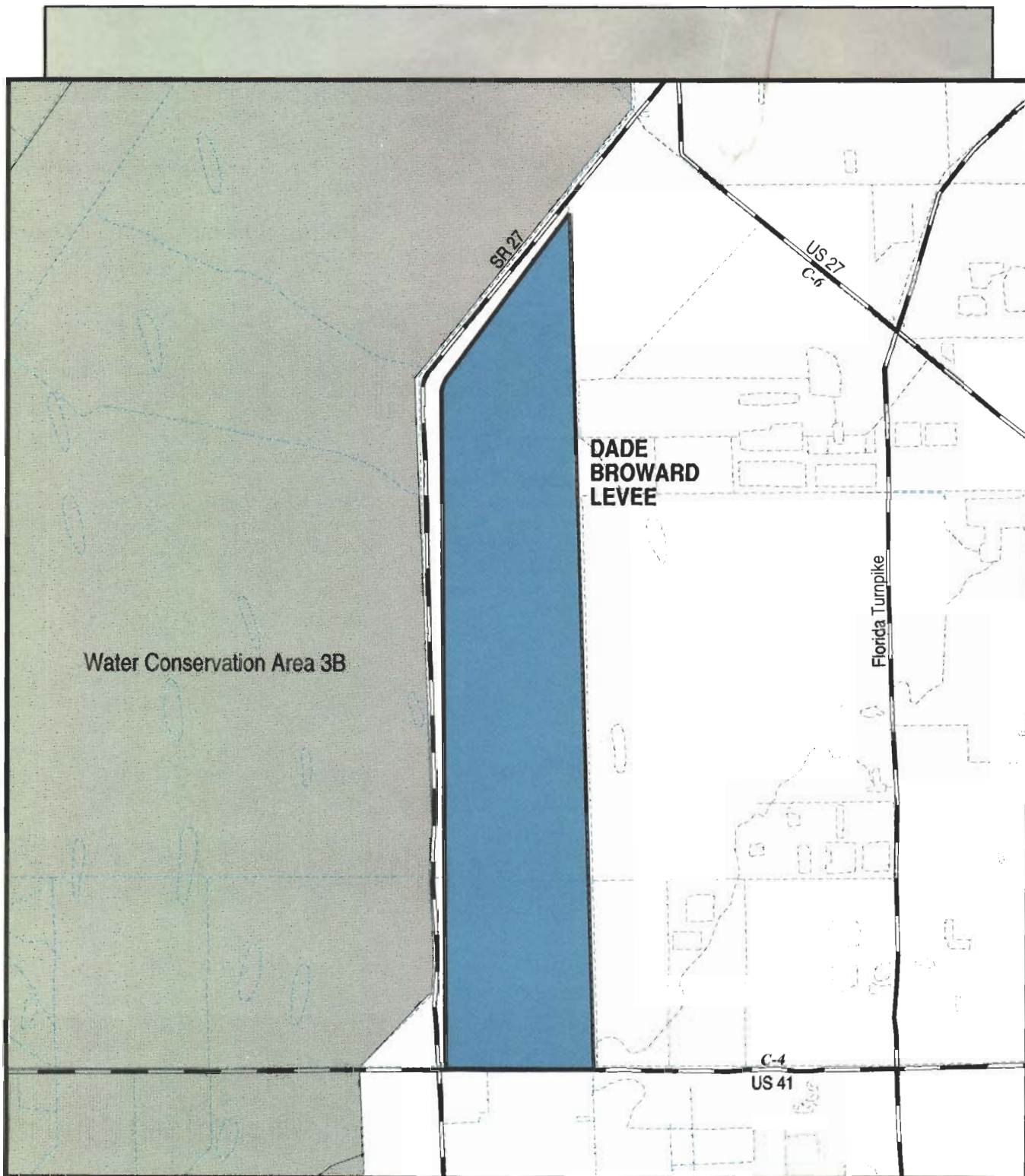
## 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:






Management needs would be basically directed toward control of Melaleuca and coordination with the Dade County Water and Sewer Authority.

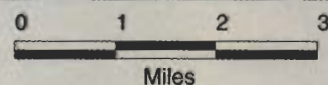
## 5. Recreation Potential:

Public use of this property is anticipated to be low due to the lack of recreational opportunities.

County:	Dade
Total Project Area:	12,000 Acres
Estimated Assessed Value:	\$30,000,000
Number of Owners:	Numerous



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# J ohnson Ranch

## 1. General Description:

Johnson Ranch is located in Highlands County, just east of Fisheating Creek. It covers approximately 1642 acres and is owned by a single individual. The current land use is cattle grazing, with most of the property in native range or semi-improved pasture. In addition to range lands, the site contains a mixture of pine flatwoods, emergent marshes, and sand pine/oak scrub.

## 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and the Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

The lands comprising Johnson Ranch include a tributary to Fisheating Creek, which flows into Lake Okeechobee. In their natural state, the upland and wetland areas filter runoff before entering the creek and provide important year round base flow to the creek. Like the rest of the areas surrounding Fisheating Creek, this parcel contributes groundwater discharge to Fisheating Creek. There is little or no recharge to the Surficial Aquifer system in this area.

The property contains a mixture of uplands and wetlands, including a portion of the Fisheating Creek floodplain. The site has been inspected by biologists from Archbold Biological Station and Florida Natural Areas Inventory, who identified the site as priority habitat for

Red Cockaded woodpeckers and Florida Scrub jays (both federally listed species).

## 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

The property is in relatively good condition. The uplands appear to have been burned on a regular basis, with the exception of the scrub, where fire has been suppressed. There is some need for ditch and swale plugging to restore the natural hydroperiod.

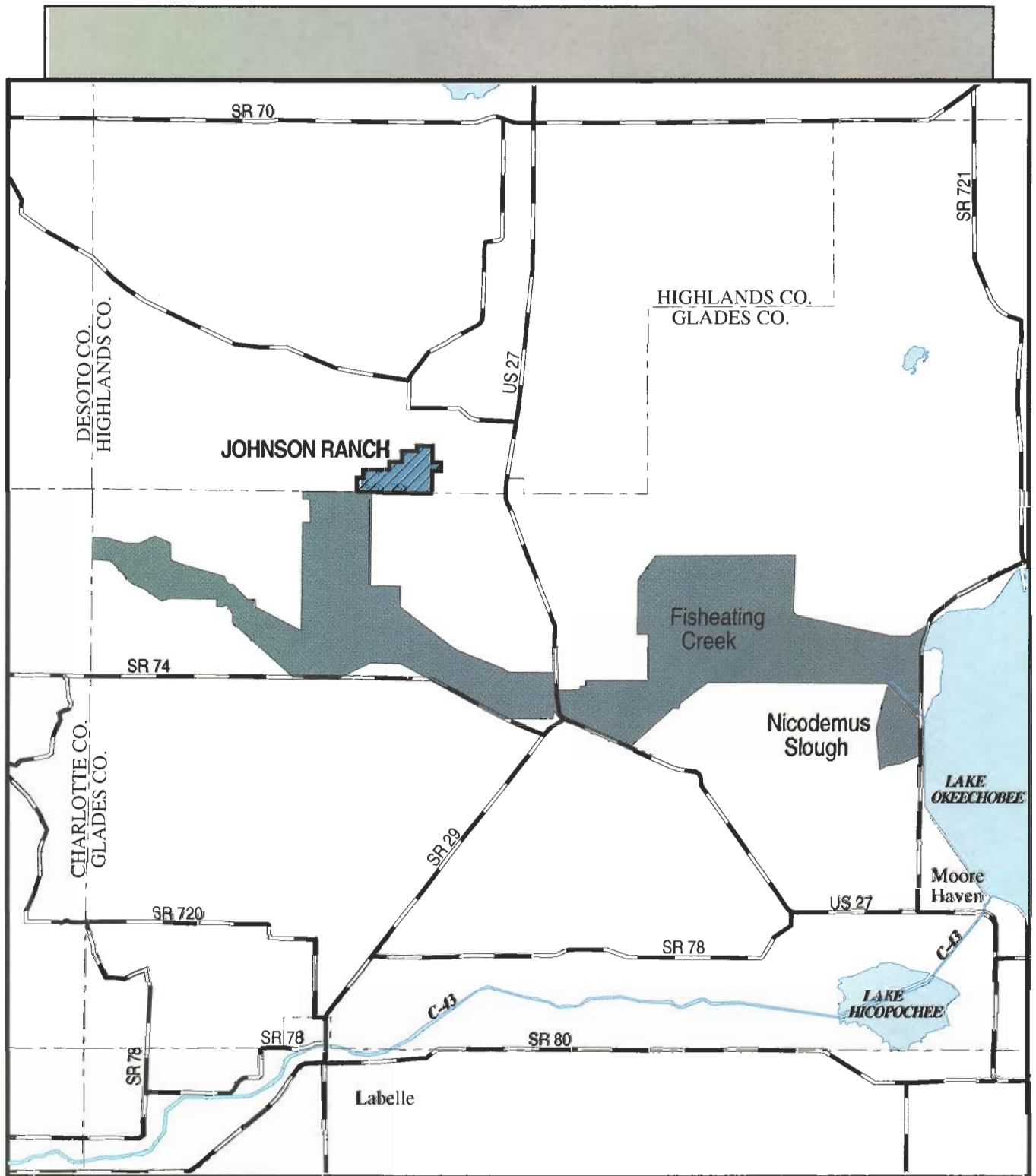
## 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:







There have been recent reports that this tract may be acquired and managed as mitigation for impacts to Red Cockaded woodpecker habitat associated with the widening of U.S. Highway 27. Hydrologic restoration, prescribed burning, and exotic control will be required no matter who manages the site.

## 5. Recreation Potential:

The location is rural and isolated; however, since Scrub jays and Red Cockaded woodpeckers are present, the site would probably be popular with organized conservation groups and bird watchers.

Project County:	Highlands
Total Project Area:	1642 acres
Estimated Assessed Value:	\$2 Million
Number of Owners:	One



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  1994 Project Additions
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary

0 2 4 6 8  
Miles





# Loxahatchee River

## 1. General Description

This project includes the historic flood plain of the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River, a National Wild and Scenic River.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities

### A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition

The District has been working closely with the Florida Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Palm Beach County, and a variety of local agencies and interest groups on plans to preserve and protect the Loxahatchee River and a major portion of its headwaters (Loxahatchee Slough). Extensive studies on the water supply and drainage requirements of the Loxahatchee River Basin have been completed. The latter work has facilitated the restoration and maintenance of base flows to the Northwest Fork and will help to reduce the frequency of discharge at Structure 46, which flows into the North Fork of the river and has caused downstream erosion and siltation problems in the past. In combination with other measures, the enhancement of flows to the Northwest Fork should help to stem the progress of the saltwater front which has advanced upstream in recent years, resulting in heavy mortality of bald cypress along the river.

The District is proceeding with hydrologic, engineering, and environmental studies necessary to restore the natural water levels and drainage for the lands south of Indiantown Road.

### B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner

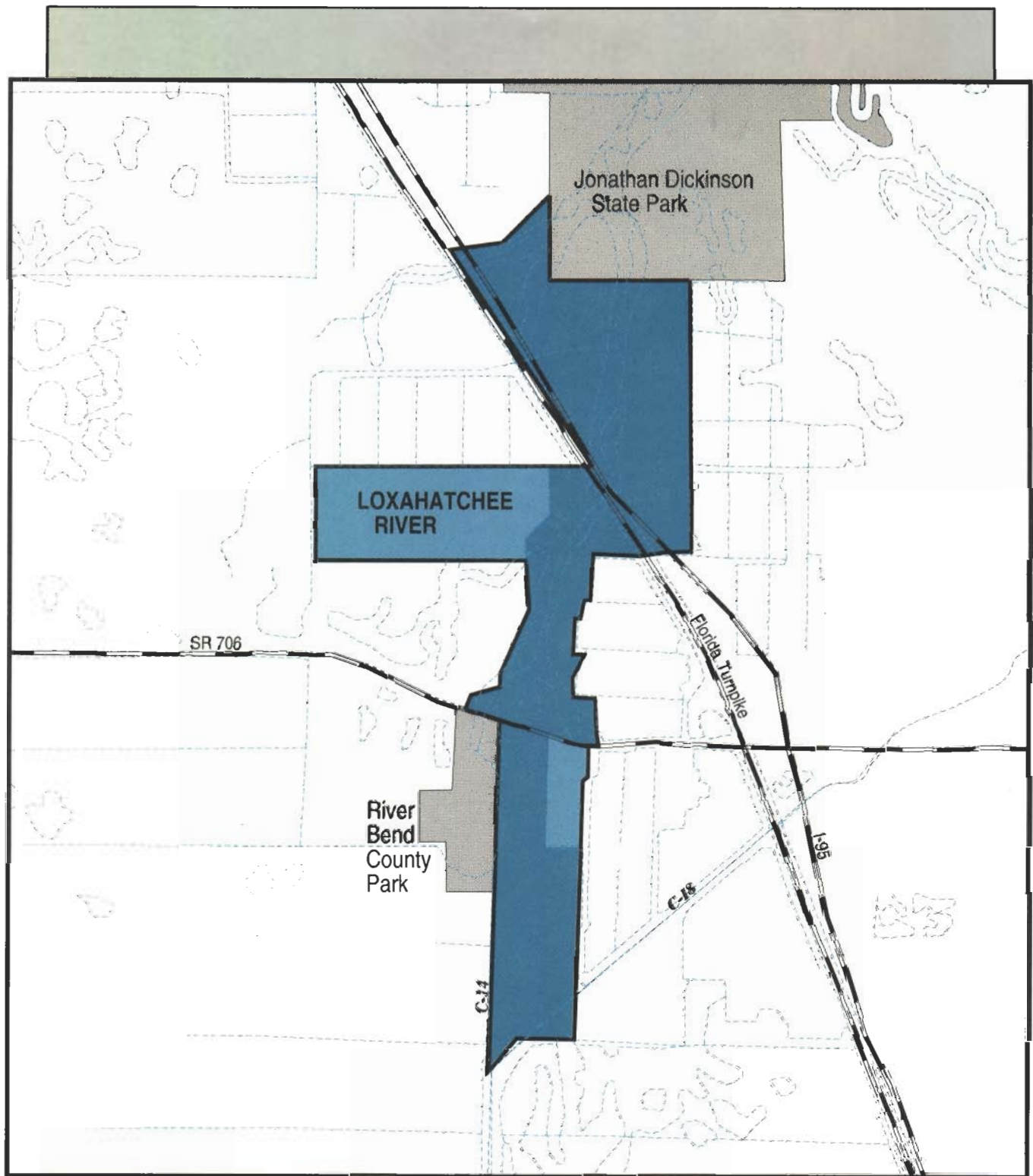
The District and DNR are working to implement the Loxahatchee River Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, which was prepared in 1985 as a requirement for inclusion of this portion of the river in the National Wild and Scenic River System. The District has purchased most of the private lands along the Northwest Fork and efforts






have been made to post the properties, repair fences and gates, remove trash and debris, and otherwise bring them up to safe and acceptable conditions. Lands north of Indiantown Road (State Road 706) are being managed by DNR, in conjunction with Jonathan Dickinson State Park. Lands south of the highway will be managed by Palm Beach County under a separate agreement with the District. Management activities include law enforcement, prescribed burning, exotic species control, public-use regulation, development of hiking trails, and interpretive programs. In general, the purpose is to carry out the intent of the Management Plan.

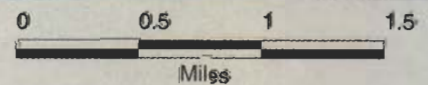
### C. Public Recreation

The Loxahatchee River has become a popular canoe trail in recent years. The number of canoeists has increased so dramatically that severe overcrowding is not uncommon on peak days. Concerned about damage to fragile plant species and the maintenance of a quality outdoor experience, DNR is working with Palm Beach County and local livery operators to identify a daily carrying capacity for the river and to implement appropriate user regulations. Fishing and powerboating is mainly confined to the lower reaches of the river; however, boaters frequently travel upriver to the Trapper Nelson site. A No Wake Zone has been established by DNR in an attempt to control erosion and avoid conflicts between boaters and canoeists. In the future, Public-use management will concentrate on providing opportunities for non-consumptive recreational pursuits, such as hiking, nature appreciation and photography, through the provision of interpretive sites, boardwalks, and footpaths. Palm Beach County is considering the development of a campground and interpretive center in its plans for Riverbend Park. Preliminary discussions have been held with the Florida Trail Association regarding the development of a future major connector trail that would link Jonathan Dickinson State Park to the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail that surrounds Lake Okeechobee.

<b>Counties:</b>	<b>Martin and Palm Beach</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>1,918 Acres</b>
<b>Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>1,462</b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$7,020,968</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$4,802</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>456</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary







# North Fork St. Lucie River

## 1. General Description

The stretch of North Fork under consideration is approximately six miles long, and extends from the White City bridge to Canal 24.

## 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

More than 80% of the project area is comprised of wetlands within the river flood plain. The wetland types include hardwood swamp, low hammock, sawgrass marsh and mangrove forest. The mangroves are limited to approximately the lower one-third of the project. The flood plain wetlands help lower current velocities in the river, thereby attenuating and gradually releasing the flood waters. This action also facilitates recharge of the surficial aquifer, and filters out nutrients, pollutants and suspended solids.

## 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

This stretch is included within the North Fork St. Lucie River

Aquatic Preserve and is classified as Outstanding Florida Water. In addition to the river flood plain, the project includes approximately 175 acres of high quality uplands, such as high hammock, pine flatwoods and sand pine scrub.

## 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

Encroaching urban development proves the greatest threat. No flood plain restoration or structure replacement appears necessary. Some exotic vegetation is present, but in controllable amounts. Both St. Lucie County and the City of Port St. Lucie have agreed to manage the property and commit funds for management should it be acquired.

## 5. Public Recreation:

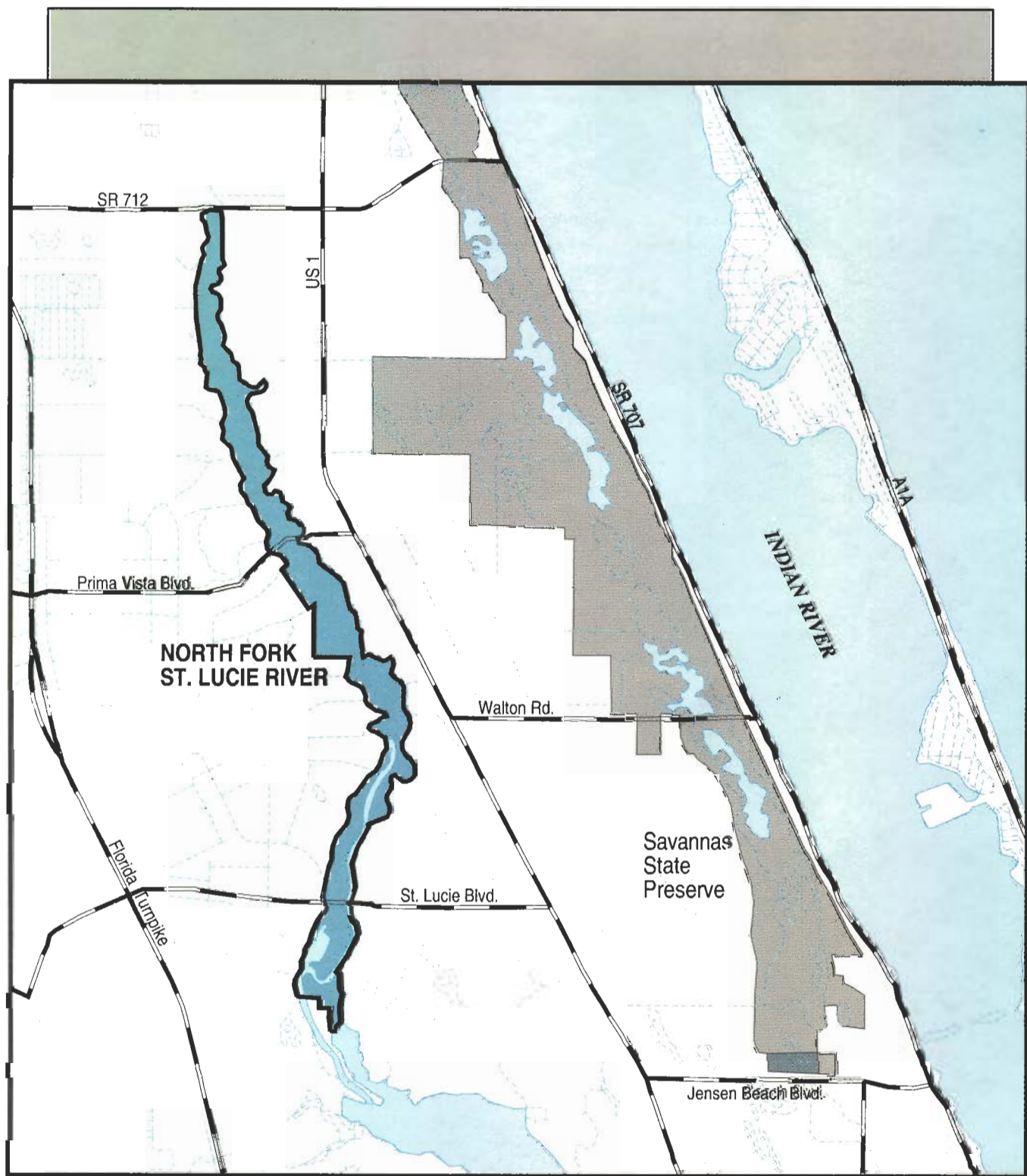
Due to its proximity to the rapidly expanding areas of St. Lucie County, the property is readily accessible to potential users. Boating, fishing and canoeing are actively pursued on this part of the river at this time. The willingness of local government to participate in management increases the likelihood of riverfront parks and other passive recreational facilities.


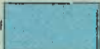
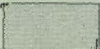


*County:* *St. Lucie*

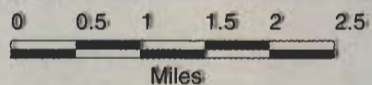
*Total Project Area:* *2,000 Acres*

*Estimated Assessed Value:* *\$5,600,000*

*Number of Owners:* *Numerous*



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# P *aradise Run*

## 1. General Description

The project lies west of Canal-38, between Structure-65 E and Lake Okeechobee. Unlike the other pools of the Kissimmee River, Paradise Run will not be reflooded by Level II Backfilling, since it is controlled by the stage in Lake Okeechobee. Remnant river oxbows are still present, although the surrounding land has been drained and is now improved pasture.

## 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

Paradise Run has degenerated because it receives no continuous surface water input to allow it to operate as a flowing riverine system. Runoff from adjacent uplands is the primary source of water. Flap-gated structures in the Levee-59 Borrow Canal can discharge water into Paradise Run when stages are high enough, but that does not occur on a regular basis. Paradise Run is physically separated from Canal-38 by a continuous spoil pile. Numerous wetlands still exist adjacent to the old river channel. Although these wetlands suffer from a lack of water, according to the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Paradise Run still has high wildlife utilization in the form of water fowl and wading birds.

## 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Since water levels in Paradise Run will not be affected by Kissimmee River restoration, other structural methods will have to be employed to provide a continuous flow of water to the reach. It appears that several engineering solutions exist. To date, time and funds have not been available to explore fully the various possibilities. Paradise Run suffers from lack of flow, resulting in stagnant conditions and low dissolved oxygen levels. Increased flows would improve greatly the quality of water being discharged to Canal-38 and Lake Okeechobee, as well as increase the habitat diversity gained by a flowing system versus a confined wetland.

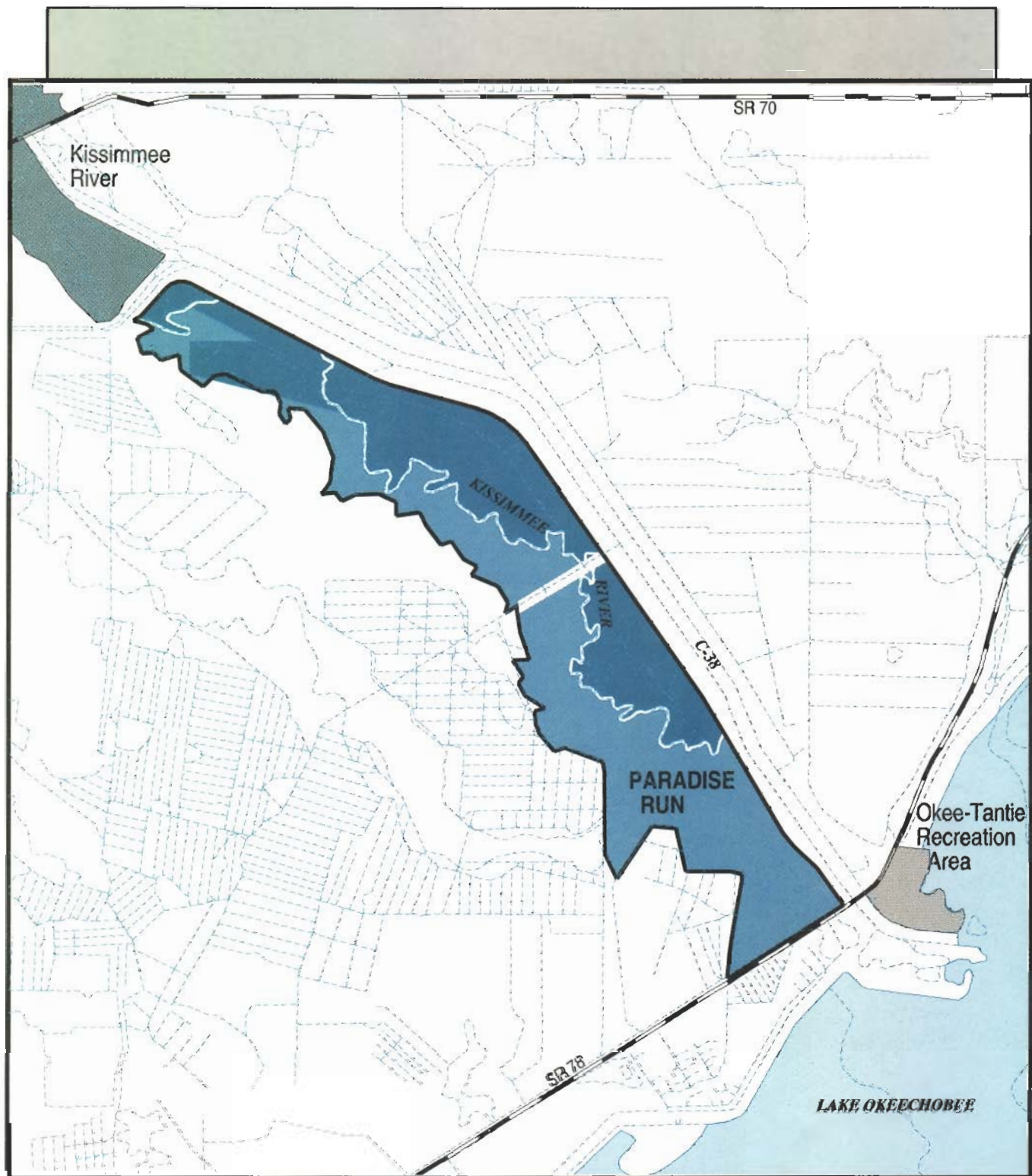
## 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:



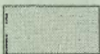

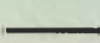
Land management in Paradise Run will be difficult if restoration of the floodplain cannot be accomplished. The present land use is improved pasture and cattle grazing.

## 5. Recreation Potential:

If connected with Canal-38 and constant flows reestablished, there is excellent potential for canoeing, fishing, and wildlife observation. Paradise Run's close proximity to the City of Okeechobee and Lake Okeechobee would make it a popular recreational destination. It is also possible that the Florida National Scenic Trail would be extended through Paradise Run.

<i>Counties:</i>	<i>Okeechobee and Glades</i>
<i>Total Project Area:</i>	<i>4,265 Acres</i>
<i>Acres Acquired:</i>	<i>1,406</i>
<i>Land Cost:</i>	<i>\$2,287,335</i>
<i>Per Acre Cost:</i>	<i>\$1,627</i>
<i>Acres Remaining:</i>	<i>2,859</i>
<i>Estimated Assessed Value:</i>	<i>\$4.5 Million</i>



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary

0 0.5 1 1.5 2  
Miles







# avannas

## 1. General Description:

The Savannas is located between the coastal dune, west of the Indian River, and the pine flatwoods of southeastern St. Lucie County. The Savannas extend into Northern Martin County. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) formerly Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has acquired approximately 4,100 acres under the Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) program. This area is managed by DEP as the Savannas State Preserve. The 1,000 acres is the remainder of the project to be acquired. The District and DNR would cooperate in acquisition.

## 2. Stewardship Activities

Water resource restoration included filling 200 feet of a drainage ditch on the SOR lands. This is predicted to reflood sixty acres of the Big Lake. In addition a mitigation project to offset installation of a 500-KV power line is projected to reflood 200 acres in both Martin and St. Lucie Counties. The project also includes removal of exotic plant materials and replacement with native plant materials.

## 3. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

The freshwater aquifer which underlies the Savannas is not productive enough for municipal uses, but the recharge that occurs along the coastal ridge serves to hold back the saltwater wedge, thereby reducing the danger of saltwater intrusion. Habitat types are diverse and in-

clude sand pine scrub, openwater sloughs, emergent marshes and low pine flatwoods. The wetlands are important feeding and nesting sites for wading birds in St. Lucie and Martin Counties whose habitat has been lost to urban development. The Savannas is under heavy development pressure on both the east and west sides.

## 4. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

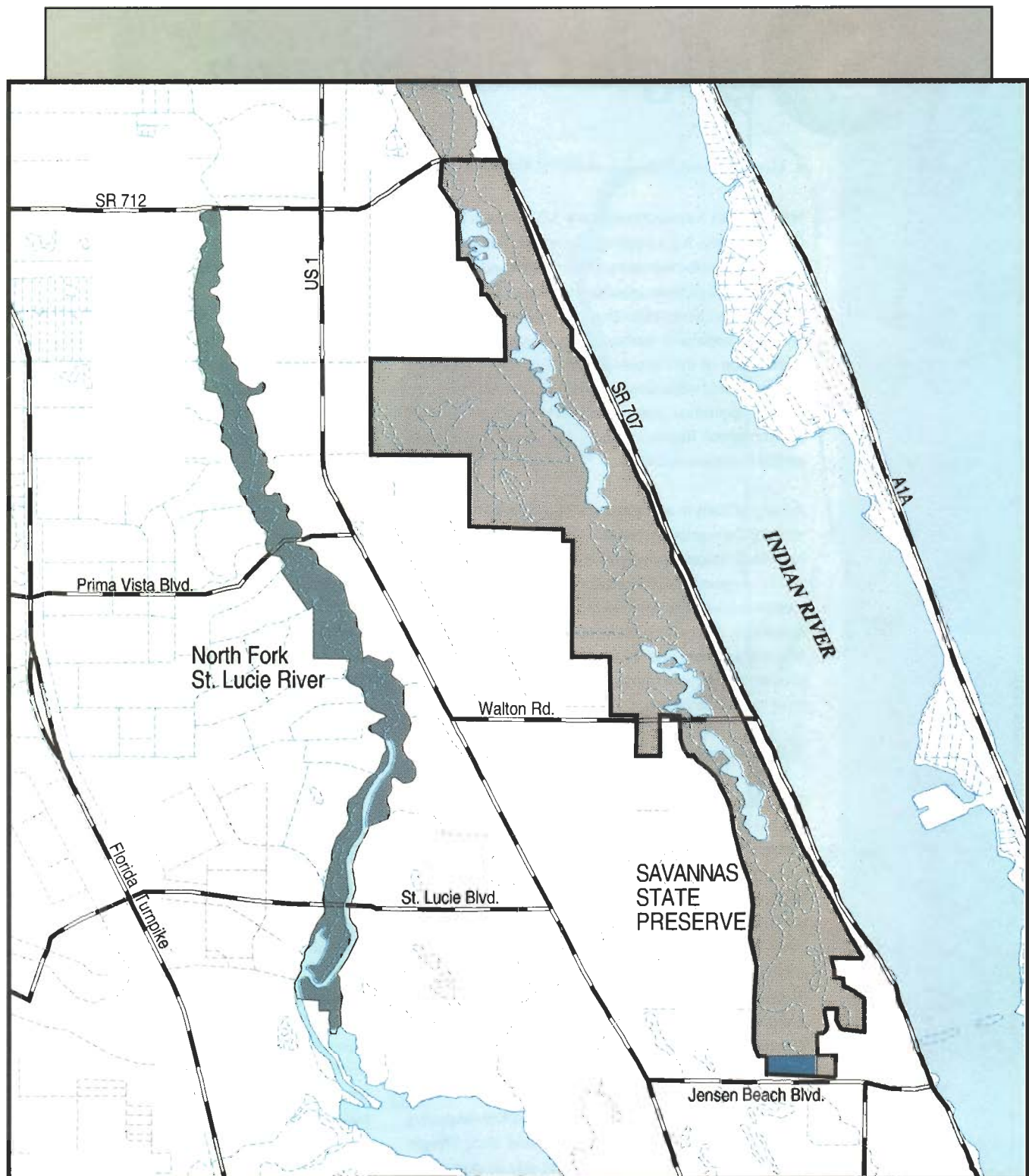
The Savannas is one of the most unique and endangered natural systems in the District. It is a remnant coastal wetland system, which historically extended along most of the Southeast Florida coast. Most of the area is in its natural state, thus eliminating the need for restoration. The wetlands are highly susceptible to degradation by stormwater inputs from urban development.



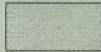

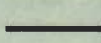
## 5. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

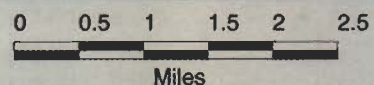
Exotic plant growth is minimal. Wetland communities are still in good condition. Extensive hydrologic restoration does not appear necessary. Management of the additional lands would be undertaken by DEP as part of the Savannas State Preserve.

## 6. Public Recreation:

Public use of the Savannas is very high. It is used extensively by fishermen, canoeists and photographers. Its close proximity to urban population centers will increase the use by the public and school groups.



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary



NOTE: SOR has Partial Ownership in the Savannas.



# **S**hingle Creek Swamp

## **1. General Description:**

Shingle Creek Swamp covers nearly 3,000 acres in Southern Orange County. It is a major receiving body for storm water runoff from areas south and southwest of Orlando. In 1990, the Florida Legislature mandated the South Florida Water Management District to develop a mitigation plan that would offset the impacts of wetland destruction to be caused by construction of the Orlando Beltway. A plan proposing a combination of wetland enhancement and wetland preservation by acquisition was approved by the Department of Environmental Regulation (now Department of Environmental Protection or DEP).

A one year study to assess the existing hydrologic conditions and map the vegetative communities has been completed. A hydrologic restoration/mitigation plan based on that analysis will be prepared and submitted to DEP by May, 1994. In conjunction with the restoration plan, seven permanent photo monitoring points have been established to document the effects of a planned hydrologic restoration. Wildlife observations are also recorded during site visits and a data base is set up to track observations.

## **2. Project Boundary Revisions**

Three areas have been added to the Shingle Creek project. The existing project lies totally within Orange County and covers approximately 2,800 acres. A 245 acre addition is being donated to the District as mitigation for the "ABC" development. Part of the land holdings of the development are located within the SOR project boundary, and others lie along Shingle Creek to the north of the project, but are contiguous. The second addition is 2300 acres within the Shingle Creek floodplain in Osceola County. The final addition is approximately 100 acres of floodplain lands along the creek in Orange County between the boundaries of the existing project and the Osceola County line.

The addition lands greatly expand the impact of the project and incorporate most of the undisturbed land along Shingle Creek. Shingle Creek plays a critical role in stormwater management for southern Orange County and the Kissimmee region of Osceola County. The inclusion of the Osceola County lands connects the Shingle Creek project with the Reedy Creek portion of the Upper Basin Lakes Watershed SOR project, thereby greatly increasing the natural area corridor.

Some upland and wetland restoration is possible in the northern most addition. The central area is in relatively good condition. The Osceola County portion is confined mostly to the creek floodplain. The uplands adjacent to the floodplain

have been cleared and drained for improved pasture. Development pressure in Orange and Osceola Counties is creating a need for suitable offsite mitigation areas. There is a possibility that upland restoration could be combined with wetland acquisition to satisfy various agency permitting requirements.

Most of the proposed addition lands are floodplain swamp. Direct management is minimal. Some exotic control and prescribed burning may be necessary in the northeast corner. If uplands were purchased adjacent to the creek in Osceola County, restoration and management would likely be funded as part of a mitigation plan.

## **3. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

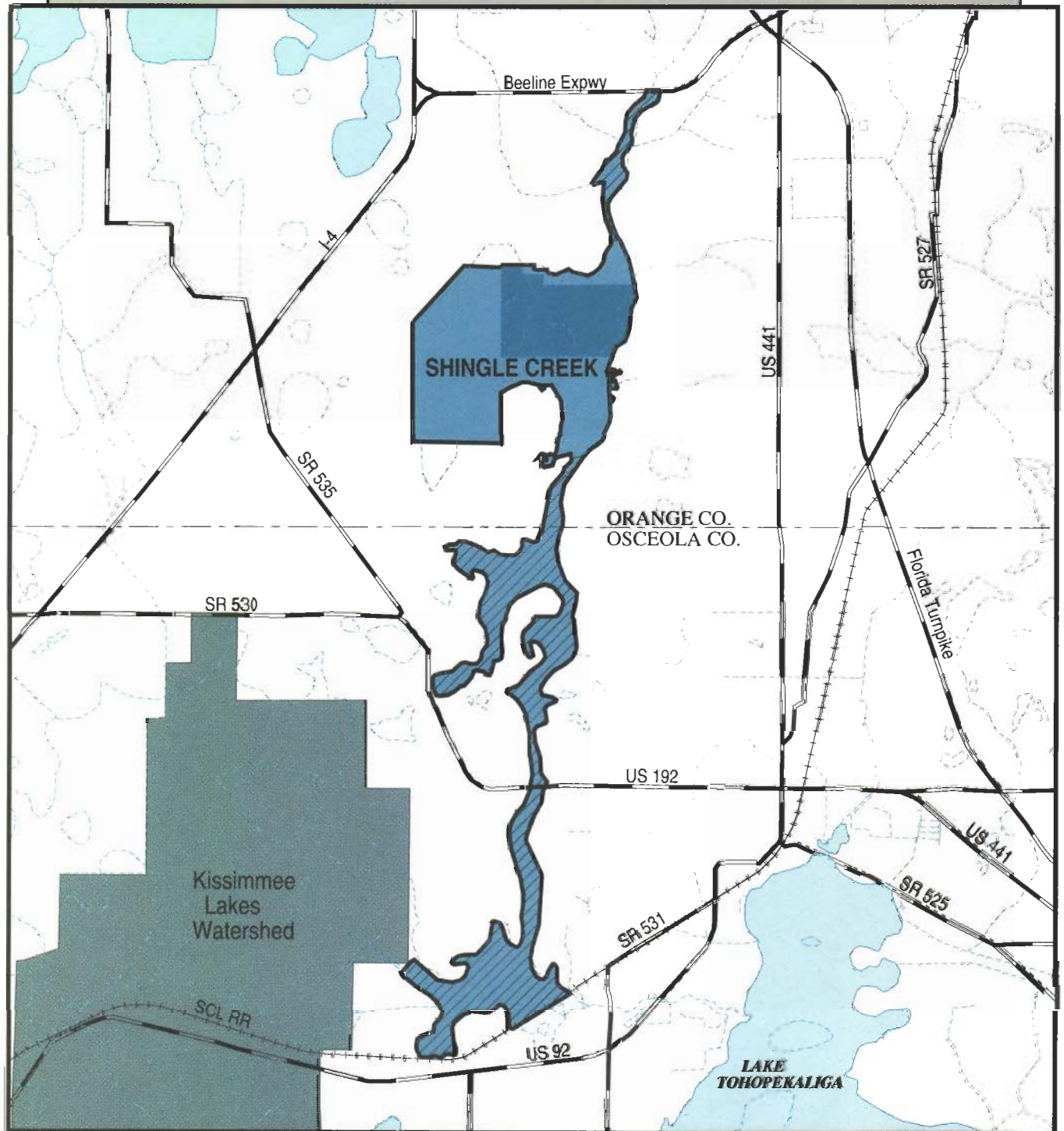
Shingle Creek Swamp is largely isolated, except for its connection with Shingle Creek, which flows along the eastern border of the swamp. It plays a very important water management role because it receives the stormwater from most of Valencia Water Control District (VWCD). The swamp has several wetland habitat types, but it has been divided by two powerline easements and their associated service roads. The swamp plays major roles in flood attenuation and water quality improvement.







## **4. Public Recreation:**

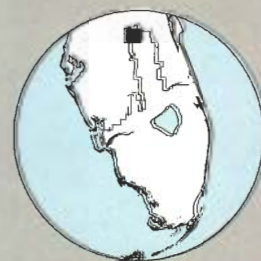
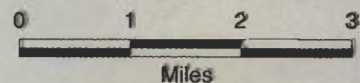
Canoeing in Shingle Creek is a popular activity. The berm, along the west side of the creek would be an excellent place for a hiking trail. Additional hiking trails and primitive camping areas could be established on upland islands within the swamp.

The City of Kissimmee owns several small tracts within the Osceola County portion of the project addition. They have expressed an interest in developing suitable recreation facilities on those areas. Since most of the addition lands are hardwood swamp forest, use would probably be limited to hiking trails and nature appreciation.

<b>Project Counties:</b>	<b>Orange/Osceola</b>
<b>Total Project Area:</b>	<b>5,425 acres</b>
<b>Total Acres Acquired:</b>	<b>846 acres</b>
<b>Land Cost:</b>	<b>\$1,334,400</b>
<b>Per Acre Cost:</b>	<b>\$1,564</b>
<b>Acres Remaining:</b>	<b>4,572</b>
<b>Estimated Assessed Value:</b>	<b>10 million</b>
<b>1993 County Donation:</b>	<b>320 Acres</b>



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  1994 Project Additions
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# Strazzulla

## 1. General Description

The Strazzulla tract is located east of the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and adjacent to Levee 40. The western half of the property is sawgrass marsh. Cypress Sloughs, mixed with low pine flatwoods and wet prairies, dominate the eastern half.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities

### A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition

Much of the eastern one-third of the project is being invaded by *Melaleuca*. The reason for this appears to be due to the lowering of the water table on the residential property to the east. If efforts to halt the invasion of exotic plants are expected to be successful, hydrologic restoration is essential.

An investigation was made to determine the feasibility of diverting pumped stormwater away from the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and onto the exotic-infested portion of the SOR tract. It was hoped that the plan

would provide the SOR property with needed water, while providing an acceptable level of treatment for the stormwater. Unfortunately, a large enough area could not be provided to accept the volume of water necessary to make the project work.

### B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner

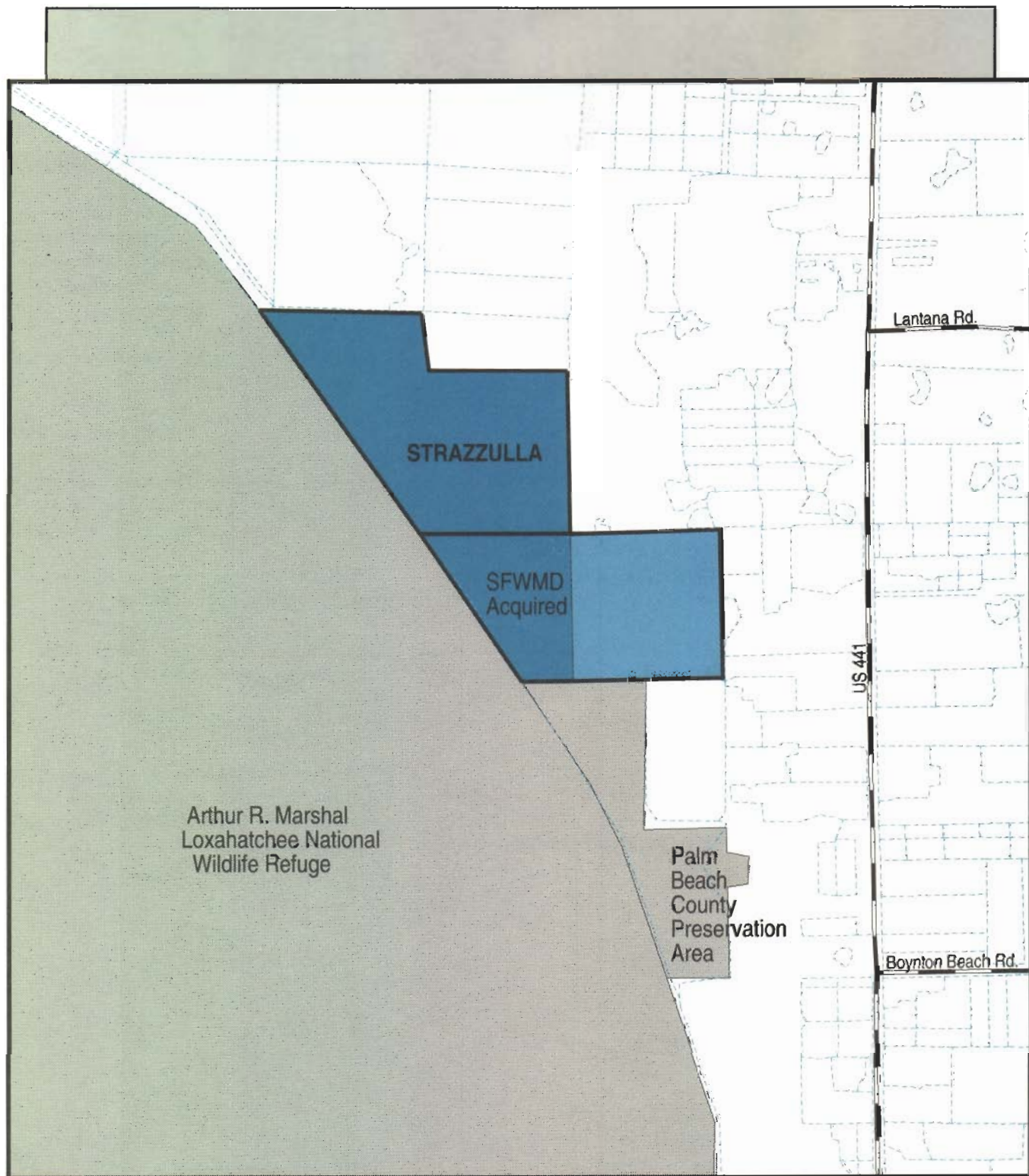
Illegal hunting and trespassing by individuals on off-road vehicles continues to be a problem. The District has contracted with a private security firm with certified law enforcement personnel to provide regularly scheduled road patrols.



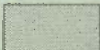

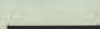
During the past year District staff has been in discussion with the management of the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge concerning the possibility of the Refuge accepting management responsibility for this project. Those discussions are unsolved at this date.

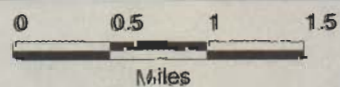
### C. Public Recreation

Recreational possibilities would be mostly passive, in nature, and probably limited to hiking and wildlife observation.

County:	Palm Beach
Total Project Area:	1,865 Acres
Acres Acquired:	1,225 Acres
Land Cost:	\$3,000,000
Per Acre Cost:	\$2,449
Acres Remaining:	640



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# T elegraph Swamp

## 1. General Description

Telegraph Swamp is located in Charlotte County and covers nearly 10,000 acres. It is a mixture of low pine flatwoods, cypress heads and emergent freshwater wetlands. The surrounding land-uses are improved pasture and native range, as well as some row-crop farming.

## 2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:

This is a diverse system with a number of habitat types. It connects with the C.M. Webb Wildlife Management Area to the north, which covers an additional 65,000 acres of similar habitat. Telegraph Swamp has important water supply features. Although little hydrogeologic investigation has been done for this area, the following assumptions can be made:

- a. This part of Charlotte County is underlain by a water table aquifer, which has a potential for development of large quantities of water for public supply. The aquifer is thickest beneath Telegraph Swamp.
- b. A situation in which a swamp occurs over the thickest part of an aquifer is ideal for aquifer recharge during the transition from dry to wet season.

- c. Telegraph Swamp appears to be an important resource with good aquifer recharge capability and potential for wellfield development. However, excessive withdrawals from the aquifer, particularly from poorly placed wells, will alter the hydroperiod of the wetland and adverse environmental impacts will result.

## 3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Telegraph Swamp is in excellent condition. No exotic vegetation has been observed. Hydrologic restoration would not be necessary. The size of the swamp and the single ownership of land around it provide it the highest degree of protection.

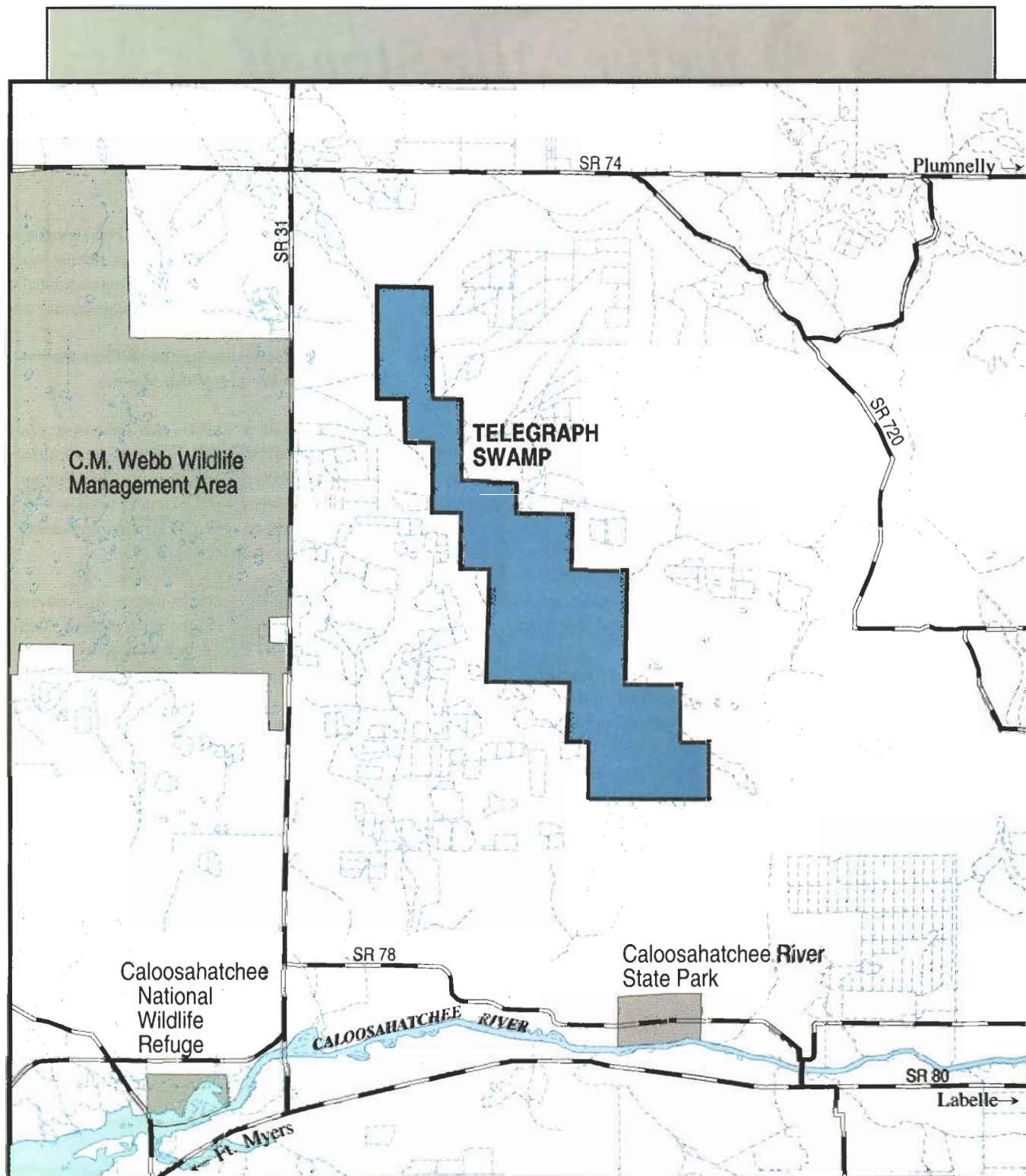
## 4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

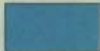
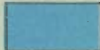
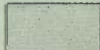
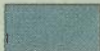

Due to the size and healthy condition of the system, management requirements are minimal.

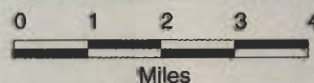
## 5. Public Recreation:

The potential for public use is uncertain. It provides excellent opportunities for hunting, but the fact that it is totally surrounded by private land and has minimal access probably limits its public-use potential.

County:	Charlotte
Total Project Area:	10,000 Acres
Estimated Assessed Value:	\$5,000,000
Number of Owners:	One



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# **T** *welve Mile Slough*

## **1. General Description:**

The property known as Twelve Mile Slough is located in Hendry County and is tributary to the much larger and regionally significant Okaloacoochee Slough. It covers 3,125 acres and contains a mosaic of uplands and wetlands, as well as improved pasture areas which appear to be reverting to native range.

## **2. Importance of Water Management, Water Supply, and the Conservation and Protection of Water Resources:**

Twelve Mile Slough is a headwater tributary to Okaloacoochee Slough, which supplies a major source of water for Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve and Big Cypress National Preserve. Surface water storage in the numerous wetlands provides for groundwater recharge of the underlying Surficial Aquifer, and provides surface water supply to the Caloosahatchee River.

The site contains a variety of vegetative communities, including several types of freshwater wetlands, pine flatwoods, and oak/cabbage palm hammocks.

## **3. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:**

Numerous small ditches and swales, which have resulted in shortened hydroperiods in many of the wetlands, were excavated as part of ranch management practices to increase the amount of grazing area. Although the ditch-

ing is extensive, it is easily correctable through earthen ditch plugs.

The Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, in its 1993 publication "Florida Panther Habitat Protection Plan," identified this property as having occasional use by panthers, and recommended public acquisition of the tract.

## **4. Potential for Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:**

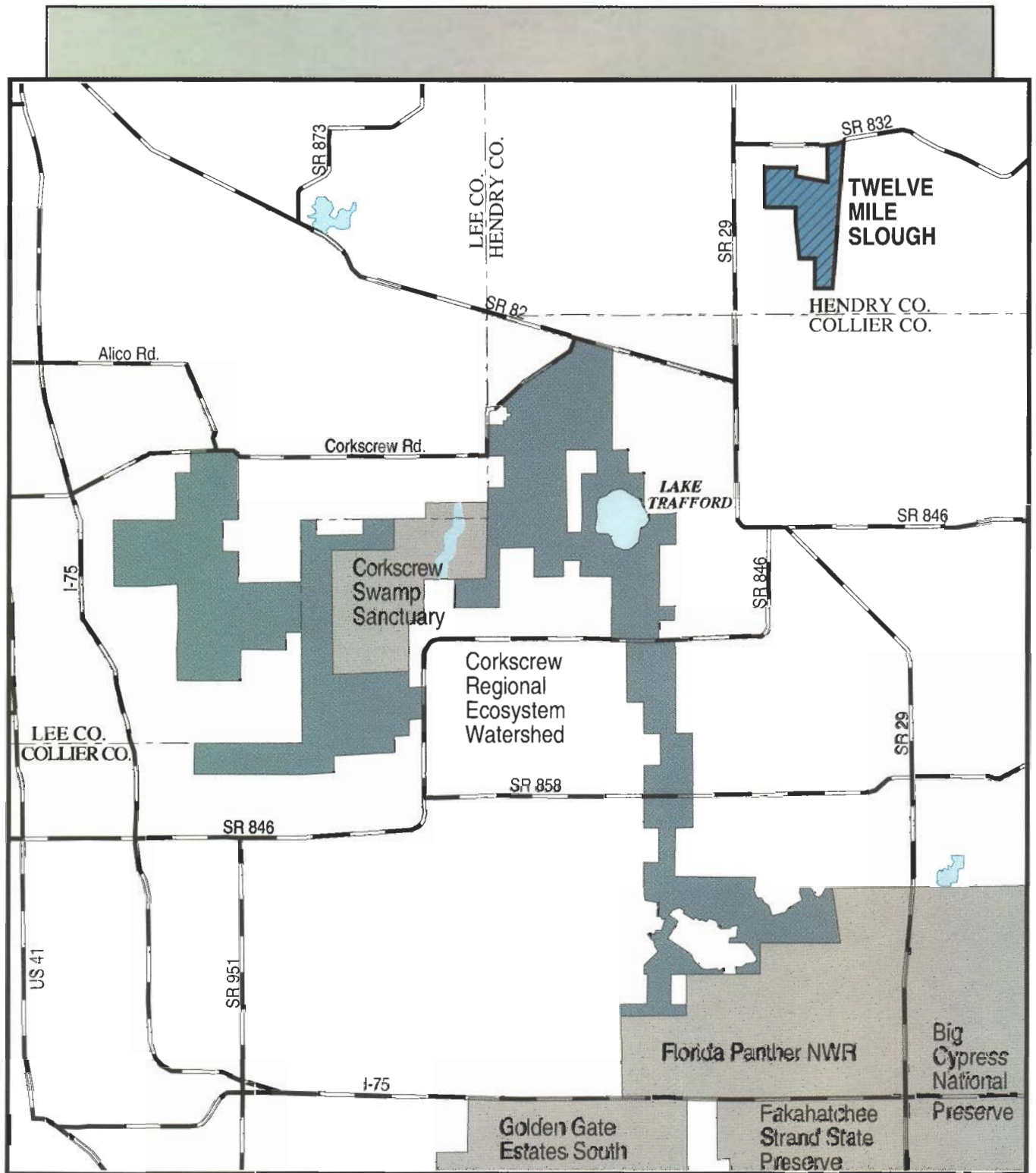
Initial observations indicate that the property is overgrazed and could benefit from an ecological grazing plan. Prescribed burning and exotic control will continue to be management needs. Ditch plugging, to allow hydrologic restoration, will be extensive and time consuming, but a relatively easy undertaking.







This site is remote; however, pasture land conversion to citrus groves is rapidly occurring in the area. There may be an opportunity for this site to be acquired, restored, and managed with mitigation funding.

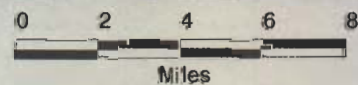
## **5. Recreation Potential:**

The mixture of habitat types would make this an interesting area for hiking trail development. However, its remoteness would probably make its use limited. An abandoned CSX Railroad grade runs adjacent to the property and lends opportunities for a "Rails to Trails" conversion, which could connect with hiking trails and primitive camping on this site.

<i>Project County:</i>	<i>Hendry</i>
<i>Total Project Area:</i>	<i>3,125 acres</i>
<i>Estimated Assessed Value:</i>	<i>\$3.1 Million</i>
<i>Number of Owners:</i>	<i>One</i>



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  1994 Project Additions
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary







## *1994 Save Our Rivers - Five Year Plan*

COMPLETED PROJECTS



# B *ig Pine Key*

## 1. General Description:

The Big Pine Key project is designed to compliment the existing Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge. Land acquisitions were initiated by The Nature Conservancy, and by District Governing Board action. The District's contribution was limited to \$2,000,000. In 1990, the District completed its land acquisition commitment to the project. The District supports the ongoing land acquisition efforts by the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and The Nature Conservancy to protect the remaining undeveloped parcels within the project boundaries.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities:

### *A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition*

A conceptual management plan was prepared under contract by The Nature Conservancy to provide future managers with guidelines for protecting and restoring the unique vegetative communities and wildlife populations on Big Pine Key. The plan includes descriptions and maps of the vegetative communities, as well as lists of observed wildlife, endangered plants and animals, and summaries of the island's freshwater lenses and hydrogeology. The plan discusses needs and methodologies for management activities which include prescribed burning, exotic plant removal and treatment, general

cleanup work, natural resource inventory, and preparation of a land management plan.

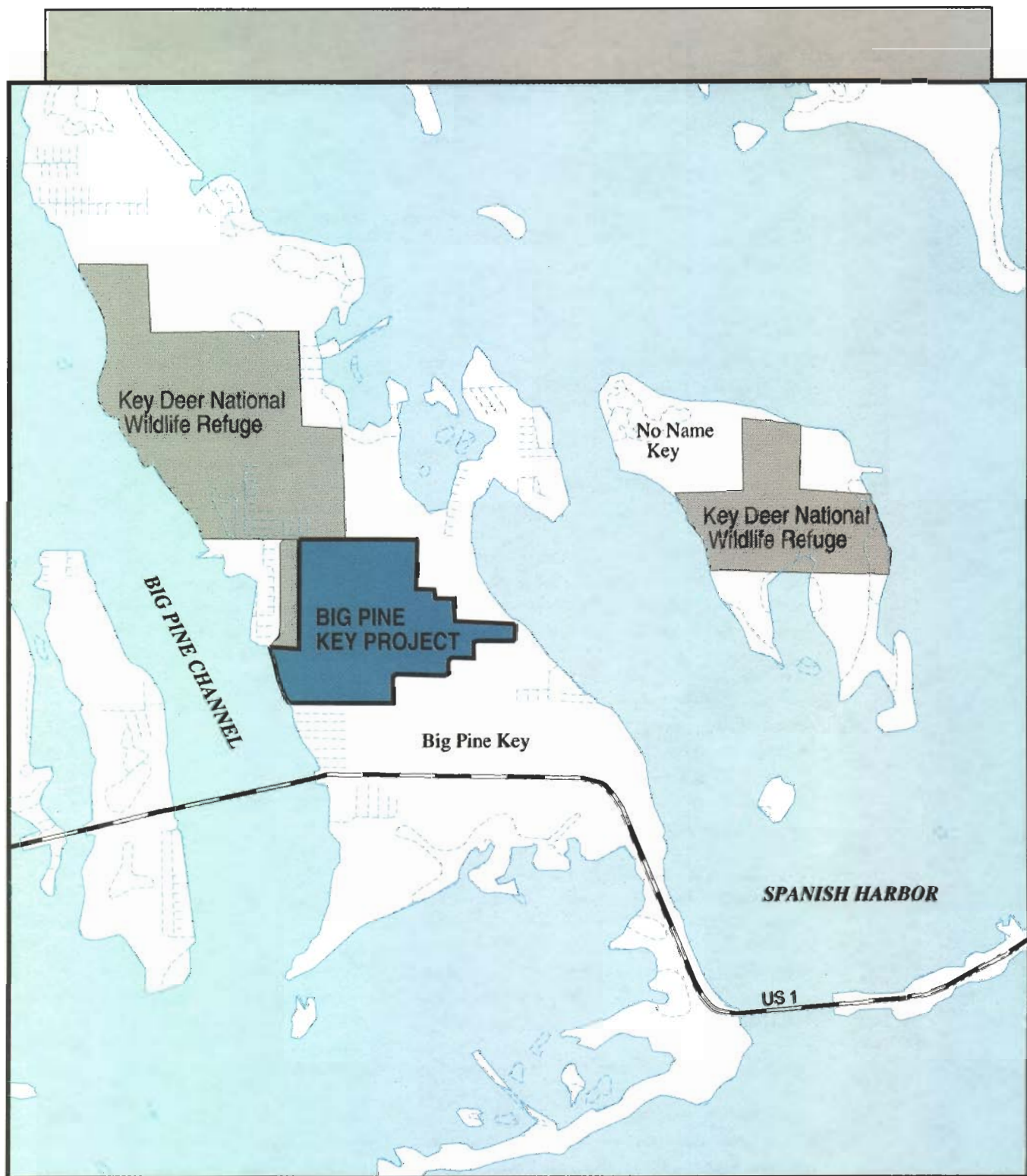
Management of Big Pine Key SOR lands by District personnel is very difficult due to its remote location. It is important to have a full time on-site manager to handle the day to day activities, as well as provide a security presence and deterrent to vandalism and illegal dumping. District staff have met with USFWS and Nature Conservancy land managers. It is proposed that long term management responsibility be turned over to USFWS.

### *B. Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition*

Protection of the wetlands and restoration of the pine rockland community centers around three major activities--exotic plant control, habitat improvement, and prescribed burning. With the exception of a single 78 acre tract, the District's ownership pattern within the project is scattered and made up of numerous small parcels.

### *C. Public Recreation*

The development of a hiking trail is possible on the largest tract (78 acres), but coordination will be done first with the National Key Deer Refuge, to see if additional trails are needed, and if the two systems can be combined.



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Area
- Other Conservation Area
- Other SOR Projects
- SOR Project Boundary

0 0.5 1 1.5  
Miles



NOTE: SOR has only Partial Ownership in the Big Pine Key Project.



# DuPuis Reserve

## 1. General Description:

The DuPuis Reserve State Forest encompasses 21,875 acres in northwestern Palm Beach and southwestern Martin Counties. The property is interspersed with numerous ponds, wet prairies, cypress domes, and remnant Everglades marsh.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities:

### *A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition*

Hydrologic restoration efforts on the part of the District continued in 1993. Ditch plugs which had been installed in 1990 - 1991 are blocking the discharge of water from wetlands which were previously drained. Upland vegetation which had become established due to over drainage is being replaced with wetland species. Three ditch plugs were designed and installed by SOR personnel in the FPL canal along the DuPuis/Corbett boundary. Breaches in the FPL service road will be made by FPL as mitigation for wetland impacts associated with another transmission line project. The intent is to restore sheetflow between Corbett and DuPuis.

Design work on a levee and water control structure along the L-8 canal has been temporarily halted. Restoration of the DuPuis wetlands as part of the C - 51 West End project is now under study. The overall objective in both cases is to restore historic hydrologic conditions to the L - 8 marsh. Either a new levee along the L - 8, or a water control structure in the L - 8 canal, would reflood more than 2,500 acres of former Everglades marsh, and the hydroperiod will significantly increase on several thousand additional acres adjacent to the marsh.

Water level recorders, vegetational transects, and permanent photo points are being used to collect data which is documenting the changes occurring on the forest as a result of the District's hydrologic restoration efforts. Wildlife observations are recorded during site visits and a data base is set up to track observations.

The Florida Division of Forestry (DOF) continued their

management activities as a contractor to the District. Their work included extension of the Jim Lake Grade, prescribed burning 5,000 acres, and spot treating exotic vegetation on more than 7,000 acres.

### *B. Public Recreation*

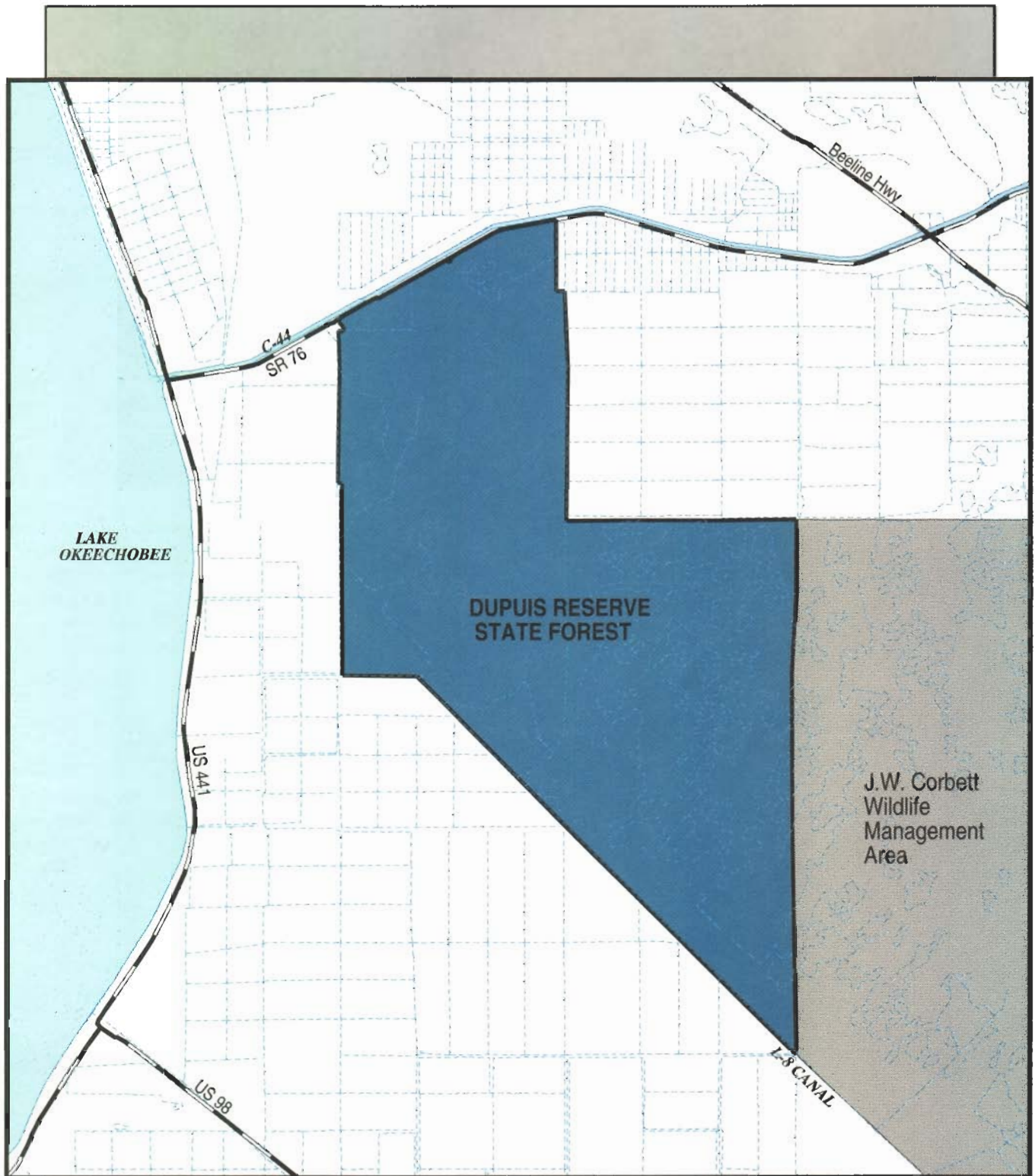
Public recreational activities are regulated by the DOF and the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and the DOF is implementing a user fee system.






District staff developed separate memorandums of understanding (MOU) with the Florida Trail Association (FTA) and the Dupuis Horsemen's Association (DHA). The hiking trails consist of four (4) loops affording hikers the opportunity of progressively longer hikes ranging from 4.3 to 16.3 miles. A primitive campsite is available for backpackers. Horseback riders have their choice of three trail loops ranging from 7.2 to 16.5 miles. An equestrian center features a restroom with showers, covered picnic area water and tethering facilities a corral, stables and areas for parking and overnight camping (tents and self-contained RVs).

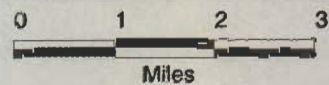
DuPuis continues to be a popular spot with hikers, campers, and horseback riders. More than 1,700 hikers and general day users visited the site and more than 1,100 equestrian users were recorded between July, 1992, and June, 1993.

A series of limited quota hunts for deer, turkey, and feral hogs is held each year under the supervision of the Commission. The program has been designed to provide a high quality hunting experience. A limited number of hunters are permitted on the reserve each day and the use of dogs and off road vehicles is prohibited. In 1993, the forest will be open for general recreational activities north of Jim Lake Grade during hunting season.

More than 1,400 man-days were recorded by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission during the 1992-93 hunting season. The DuPuis Grade was made available to hunters for the first time which improved access into the interior of the forest. As a result, the feral hog harvest increased dramatically to 545 animals.



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# Nicodemus Slough

## 1. General Description:

Nicodemus Slough encompasses approximately 2,200 acres of wet prairie, broadleaf marsh and transitional wetland (cordgrass) south of the Herbert Hoover Dike (LD-3) and west of State Road 78. Scattered tree growth occurs along the western edge of the tract. It was targeted for purchase in the original SOR legislation because the land floods periodically under the higher regulation stages of Lake Okeechobee. The property was used for cattle grazing.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities:

### *A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition*

Until recently, the construction of the Herbert Hoover Dike, coupled with the maintenance of lower stages in Lake Okeechobee, resulted in a shortened hydroperiod and general lowering of water levels in Nicodemus Slough. This in turn altered vegetative patterns on the property and permitted the spread of transitional and upland species. The installation of new water control structures and associated improvements to the Canal 19/Levee-41/42 system will enable the retention and manipulation of flood waters on the property that result from runoff and higher lake stages. A marsh revitalization program has been proposed by District staff for implementation in the future, following the completion of the new water control facilities.

A borrow pit used for fill to raise the highway was shaped to be a new lake with a meandering shoreline. This year a district contractor removed invading exotic plants and planted the lake littoral zone with native vegetation.

The Nicodemus Slough property is being used in part of the Save Our Rivers monitoring program. A natural community vegetation map is being created. Three photopoints are set up among the basin marsh and wet prairie communities. These photopoints are designed to monitor effects of the ongoing hydrologic restoration

project and land management activities.

Wildlife observations are recorded during site visits and a data base is set up to track observations.

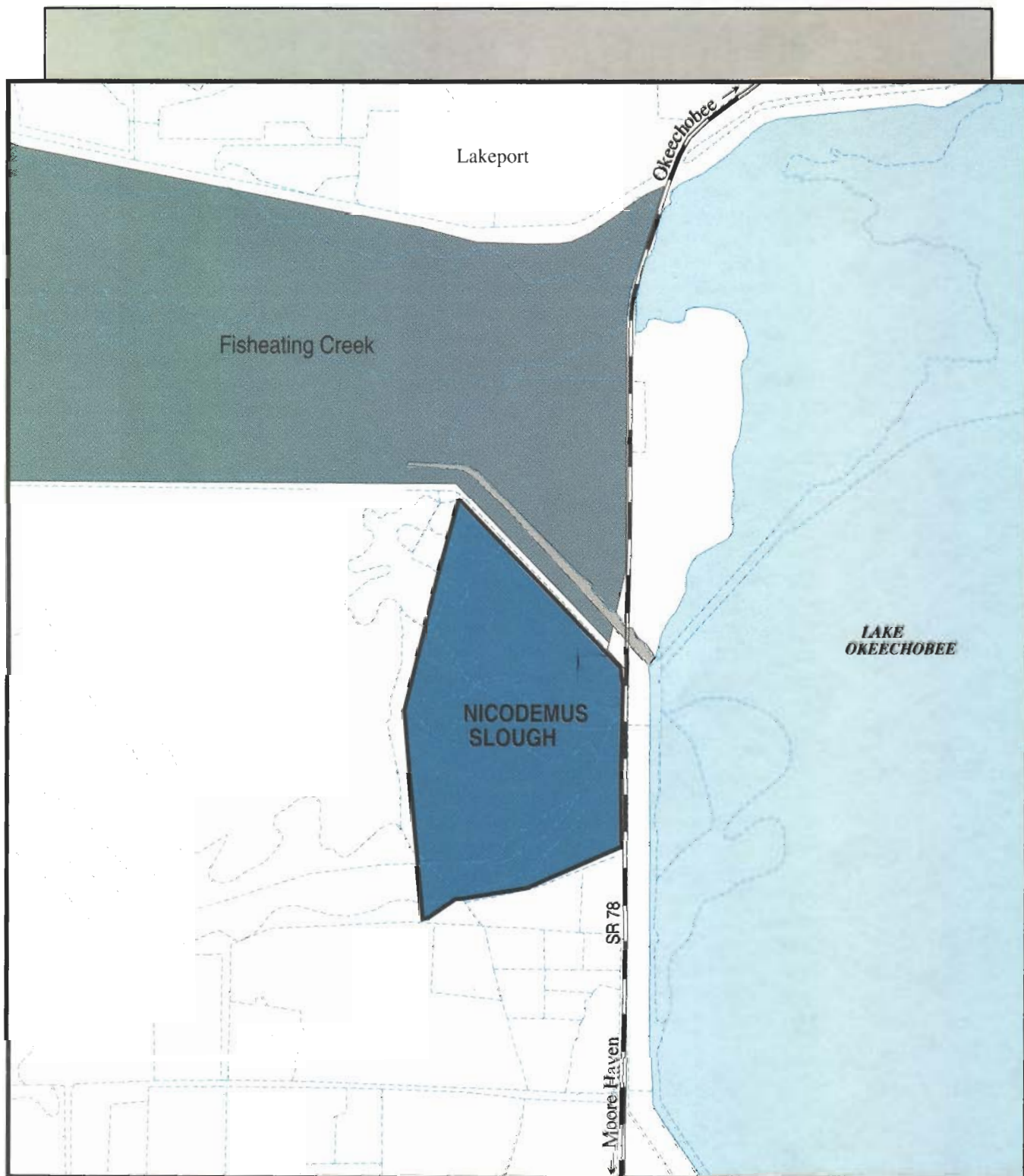
### *B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner*






The District prepared a conceptual management plan for the property. Discussions are being held with Glades County regarding the establishment of a cooperative management program. If approved, the District will undertake all those activities related to habitat management, water quality and the manipulation of water levels in Nicodemus Slough. Such activities will include, but not be limited to, prescribed burning, exotic species control, water quality monitoring and biological monitoring. Water control structures will be operated to increase the use of the area by waterfowl and wading birds. Glades County will manage and regulate public use of the property for approved educational and outdoor recreation activities.

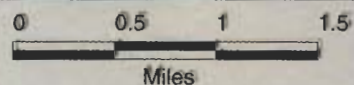
### *C. Public Recreation*

Facilities will be provided to facilitate access to, and use of, Nicodemus Slough for fishing, picnicking, canoeing, hiking, nature observation and photography. Hunting, power boating (including airboating), and the use of off-road vehicles will be prohibited, as the area is too small and such activities would conflict with the District's restoration objectives.

Some unauthorized hunting has taken place on the property since it was acquired by the District, and there is local interest to open the area to airboat use. Some limited waterfowl hunting may be feasible in the future; however, the use of airboats and other types of motorized craft does not appear compatible with the goal of improving the habitat for waterfowl and wading birds, particularly in light of the limited size of the tract. The property is probably best suited for operation as a wildlife viewing area and should be limited to passive, non-consumptive activities.



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# Six Mile Cypress I

## 1. General Description

Six Mile Cypress Slough occupies approximately 2000 acres in Lee County southeast of the City of Ft. Myers. It extends from State Road 82 southwesterly for approximately nine miles to Ten Mile Canal. The slough averages 1,500 feet in width. The Slough consists of cypress swamp, interspersed with numerous open ponds. It is fringed with pine flatwoods, transitional hardwoods, wet prairies, and Melaleuca. Melaleuca has become the dominant vegetation type south of Daniels Road.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities:

### A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition:

Lee County has agreed to develop, operate and maintain the slough as a nature preserve under an agreement with the District. A detailed description of the slough is contained in the Six Mile Cypress Slough Management Plan prepared by the County in 1986. Specific actions to implement the plan are set forth in the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve Land and Water Management Plan prepared by the County and approved by the District in 1988.

Melaleuca and Brazilian Pepper are problem exotics that have proliferated in certain portions of the slough. Native vegetation has been completely replaced by Melaleuca in approximately 200 acres. A vigorous eradication/control program involving chemical and mechanical applications is planned to halt the future spread of these species. Reforestation with native species will be undertaken where large stands of exotics are removed. Lee County has a management agreement with the Division of Forestry to provide exotic control and reforestation for the Preserve.

### B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner:

In 1991 control structures at the terminus of the Slough were completed. These help retention of water in the area and serve to maintain the water table in the slough. In addition, a water conservation facility is located at the intersection of Daniels Parkway and Six Mile Parkway.

The entire perimeter of the slough is posted to discourage unauthorized access. Problem areas are being fenced and/or barricaded. Routine patrol is provided by preserve personnel and the Lee County Sheriff's Department.

A prescribed burning program is proposed for the pine flatwoods north of Penzance Road to maintain the species composition of this community and prevent the buildup of fuels that could result in damaging wildfires. Fire lanes will be constructed to facilitate the burns and to protect sensitive cypress and hardwood areas. Wildfires will be suppressed only when considered necessary to protect adjacent lands and highway travel or when preserve resources would be subject to irreparable damage.

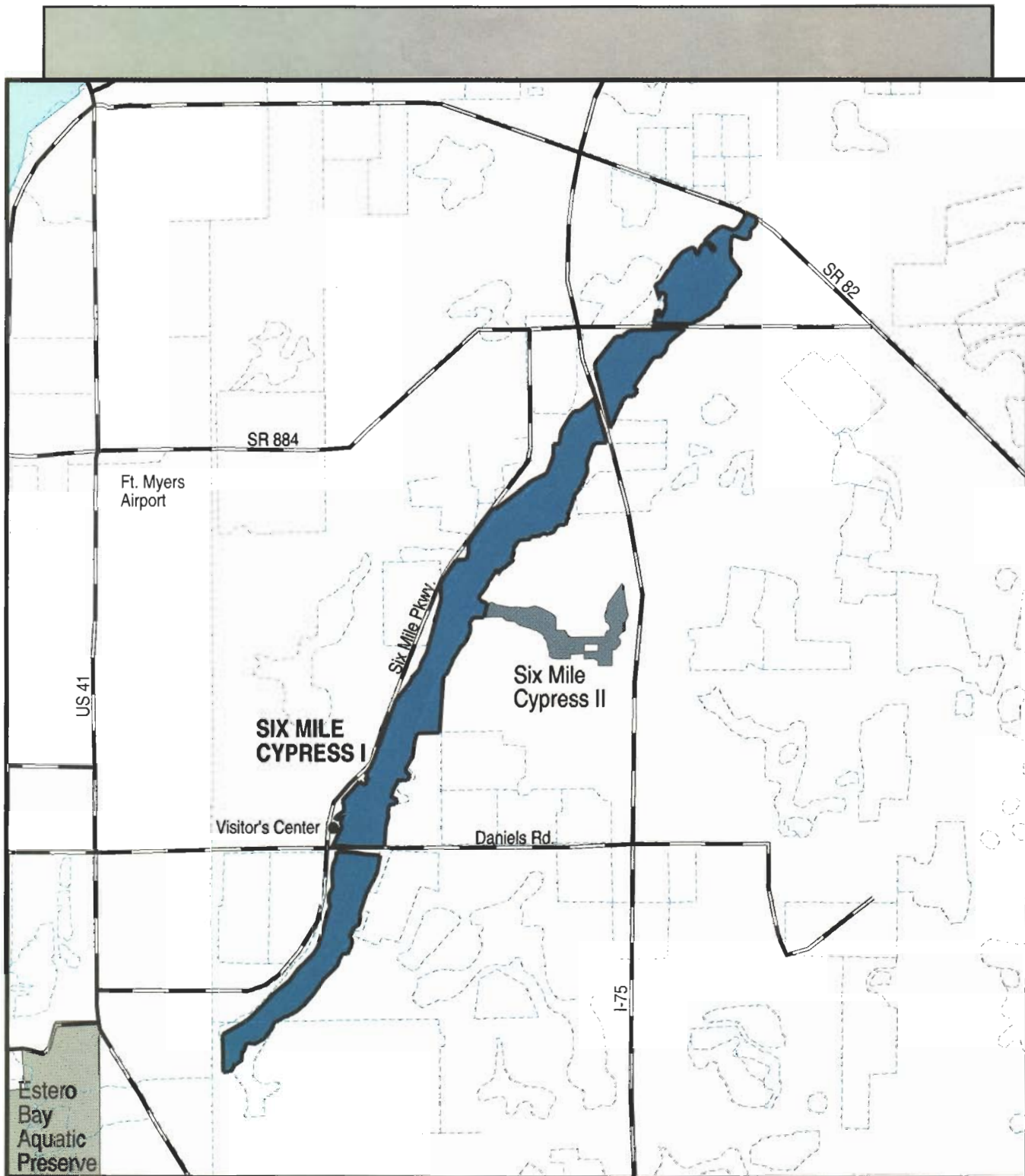
A complete list of wildlife species utilizing the slough is contained in the County's original management plan. Monitoring the occurrence of wildlife will be continued to determine if any changes in usage occurs. Consideration will be given to the needs of wildlife in reforestation efforts. Nest boxes will be installed to benefit cavity nesters, such as wood ducks, owls, and woodpeckers.






### C. Public Recreation:

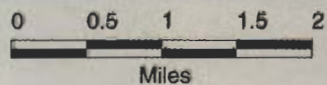
The slough has been used informally for both active and passive recreational activities for many years. The continuation of passive activities such as fishing, picnicking, photography and nature observation will be encouraged in appropriate locations within the preserve. Interpretive facilities consisting of an elevated boardwalk, covered amphitheater and parking area opened this year. Special programs are conducted by the Lee County Parks and Recreation Department. The Lee County School Board Department of Environmental Education continues to conduct field trips to the slough. Each year several thousand school children get a first hand exposure to the slough.

County:	Lee
Total Project Area:	1,741 Acres <sup>1</sup>
Acres Acquired:	794
Land Cost:	\$1,520,321
Per Acre Cost:	\$1,914
Acres Remaining (SOR):	0 <sup>1</sup>
(See Also Six Mile Cypress II)	

<sup>1</sup> SOR acquisition completed.  
Lee County to acquire remainder of Six Mile Cypress I.



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary





# Tibet-Butler Preserve

(Previously Lake Forest Preserve)

## 1. General Description:

The preserve covers 439 acres along the southwest shore of Lake Tibet-Butler in Orange County. The land is designated for preservation and restoration for use in public education and passive recreation. The vegetative communities include major areas of Bay Swamp, Pine Flatwoods and Wetland Forested Mixed and smaller areas of Xeric Oak, burned trees, Coniferous Plantation, Cypress, Pond Pine, Freshwater Marsh and Emergent Aquatic Vegetation. The Tibet-Butler Preserve site includes approximately 4000 feet of shoreline on Lake Tibet. The majority of the site is within the 100 year flood plain and is subject to seasonal inundation. State Road 535 (Winter Garden-Vineland Road) traverses the southwest edge of the property.

## 2. Land Stewardship Activities:

### A. Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition

The stated County goals of the Preserve are wetland and wildlife habitat preservation as well as educational and passive recreation. Vegetative management is planned to include wetland preservation, prescribed burning, exotic control, selective cutting of trees to improve habitat, and reforestation in some areas.

### B. Managing and Maintaining in an Environmentally Acceptable Manner

Orange County is managing the property under an agreement with the District. During 1991 and 1992, Orange County Staff performed extensive studies and field work

to locate phase one facilities of the nature center. Primary attention was directed toward locating facilities in non-wetland areas. Design and permitting activities also sought minimum clearing for nature center facilities. District staff reviewed site locations with Orange County staff.






### C. Public Recreation

The diverse natural features of the Preserve make it attractive for hiking, wildlife observation, environmental education and an overall experience of the variety of the Central Florida environment. Careful planning, siting and control of access is a portion of the management program.

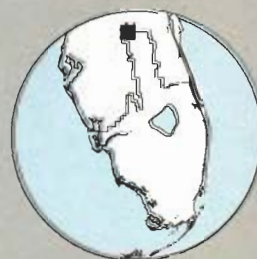
The master plan concentrates the nature center and related uses within the pine flatwood community adjacent to SR 535, in the southwest portion of the site. From the nature center, trail systems will extend outward reaching into wetland and bog communities, xeric communities and marsh and lake communities. In some areas boardwalks are planned to extend out in short runs from the main trail loops to observation blinds. Other facilities include controlled primitive group camping areas as well as group and individual picnic areas. Phase one of the hiking trail network is field staked and nearing completion.

Phase one construction is underway and nearing completion. The roadway is nearly complete and the water treatment plant on-line. Perimeter fencing and security gate are complete. A temporary office has been set up on site. Phase two is under way. The Nature Center is expected to be completed in late 1993.



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Area
-  Other Conservation Area
-  Other SOR Projects
-  SOR Project Boundary

0 0.25 0.5 0.75  
Miles







## *1994 Save Our Rivers - Five Year Plan*



# *OR Land Selection and Acquisition Policy*

## **Table of Contents**

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## A. STATEMENT OF POLICY

1. The Governing Board recognizes a need to provide guidelines for selecting projects to be considered under the Resource Rivers Act (Section 373.59 Florida Statutes), which is also known as the Save Our Rivers Program. These guidelines include procedures for project selection and land acquisition and are intended as an addition and complementary to Rule 40E-7, Florida Administration Code.

2. It is the Governing Board's intention to implement the Save Our Rivers Program in a manner that will provide long-term benefit to the citizens living within the District as well as the water resources of the District.

3. The Governing Board recognizes that the Program's resources are limited and that land acquisition under the Program will primarily be on a willing seller basis.

4. It is the goal of this Program to identify, prioritize and acquire necessary interests in lands for water management, water supply, conservation and protection of water resources.

5. In compliance with Section 373.59, Florida Statutes, the District will file an annual five-year plan with the Department of Environmental Regulation and the Florida Legislature.

6. Funding for the Save Our Rivers Program is derived from revenue and Preservation 2000 Bond proceeds collected from the documentary stamp tax and it is administered by the Department of Environmental Regulation as provided for by Rule 17-42, Florida Administration Code.

7. To most effectively administer the Save Our Rivers Program, the District will closely coordinate with all other public land acquisition programs.

8. Through its regulatory programs, the District shall apply the same regulatory criteria to lands being considered for acquisition/protection under the SOR program, as it does to similar lands not being considered for acquisition/protection.

The District's regulatory program shall not be used solely to reduce or control value of lands to be considered for acquisition/protection under the SOR Program, notwithstanding normal effects of regulations on land values.

9. It is the policy of the Governing Board that inclusion of a property in the Five-Year Plan, pursuant to Section 373.59, F.S., does not reflect a definite intention by the South Florida Water Management District to acquire said property. Inclusion in the Five-Year Plan indicates that the subject property has acquisition

potential depending upon further investigation as to its water resources, environmental and management features and negotiation of a mutually acceptable acquisition price.

10. The acquisition cost shall be the purchase price plus ancillary cost as listed below.

### SOR Ancillary Cost:

- a. Appraisal Contract
- b. Risk Assessment Contract
- c. Title Insurance
- d. Closing Cost
- e. Boundary Survey and Legal Descriptions
- f. Staff Time for Direct Negotiations
- g. Management and Review of Appropriate Contracts and Title Insurance Contracts
- h. Management and Review of Risk Assessment Contracts
- i. Staff Time for Legal Support
- j. Travel (Directly connected with a specific acquisition)

## B. SCOPE

This policy will apply to all projects selected under the Save Our Rivers Program.

## C. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- a. Acquisition - acquiring title to land in fee; or in the discretion of the District, such other legal interest necessary for water management, water supply, or the conservation and protection of water resources.
- b. Board - the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District.
- c. Department - the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation.
- d. District - the South Florida Water Management District.
- e. Plan - the Five Year Plan as approved by the.
- f. Secretary - the secretary of the Department.
- g. Selection - the process of identifying and evaluating proposed projects for inclusion in the plan.
- h. SOR - the Save Our Rivers Program as provided under Section 373.59 F.S.
- i. SOR Project - a geographical area possessing unique features necessary for water management, water supply, and the conservation and protection of water resources.



- j. Florida Preservation 2000 - Section 259.101, Florida Section, providing for the proceeds of bonds deposited in the Florida Preservation 2000 Trust Fund and for criteria for certain projects financed by such proceeds.

2. **SELECTION COMMITTEE:** A committee shall be established and composed of the following District staff members to make recommendation to the Board for selection of projects for inclusion in the plan:

- a. Director, Department of Planning
- b. Director, Department of Regulation
- c. Director, Department of Research and Evaluation
- d. Director, Department of Operations and Maintenance
- e. Director, Department of Land Management
- f. Deputy Executive Director
- g. District Counsel
- h. Director, Department of Construction Management
- i. Director, Department of Finance and Administration

Each committee member may designate a specific staff member to function as the representative on all committee work.

The Committee Chairman will be the Deputy Executive Director and Vice Chairman will be the Director of Land Management.

The committee shall be responsible for receiving and evaluating all suggestions for selection of projects under the Save Our Rivers Program. In addition, the committee shall provide direction to the Save Our Rivers Program for the Development of policies. This includes the incorporation and prioritization of the projects currently on the District's Strategic Plan with the Save Our Rivers Five Year Plan and the administration of Preservation 2000 requirements. All proposals to the Board for selection shall originate from the committee; all suggestions for selection shall be submitted to the committee. The committee shall meet at least twice a year to consider all suggestions for selection and to prepare a plan of proposed projects. In order for a suggested project to receive approval for consideration on the plan proposed by the committee, it must be nominated by one committee member and have votes of approval by at least five committee

members. Should any members of the committee have a direct or indirect, present or contemplated future interest in a parcel proposed or could personally benefit from the acquisition of the parcel, the member shall not participate in discussion, vote or other action in regard to that parcel. The Board may consider appeals on any project proposed to the committee but not recommended to the Board by the committee.

The public meetings of the Selection Committee shall be widely publicized. Minutes summarizing all comments made at the meetings shall be prepared and distributed to all committee members.

#### D. PROJECT SELECTION GUIDELINES

1. **TYPES OF PROJECTS:** Projects considered necessary for water management, water supply and the conservation and protection of water resources and thus eligible for selection include but are not limited to:

- a. river and stream flood plains
- b. river and stream flood ways
- c. river and stream flood hazard areas
- d. river and stream littoral areas
- e. springs
- f. lakes including littoral zones
- g. aquifer recharge area
- h. wetlands,
- i. well fields,
- j. unique water features,
- k. appropriate buffer zones qualifying for a - j
- l. lands needed to retain or store water, or
- m. remainders of land ownerships included in a -

2. **SOR PROJECT PROPOSAL:** The SOR Projected Proposal Form shall be completed and submitted to the District for consideration of any proposed project.

3. **EVALUATION MATRIX:** The project Evaluation Matrix is used to screen and categorize prospective additions to the Five Year Plan. Based on the Project Ranking Criteria and Guidelines for Site Priority Ranking, each project will be scored on a 1-5 scale for each parameter. In addition, weighting factors, or multipliers, have been added to certain high priority parameters. The first phase, or Category I parameters, deal strictly with water resource related issues.

#### CATEGORY I

##### PARAMETER

##### WEIGHTING FACTOR

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a. Water Management                               | 5 |
| b. Water Supply                                   | 5 |
| c. Conservation and Protection of Water Resources | 5 |

Each project will be screened by the parameters in Cat-

egory I first. After the initial screening is complete, seven additional factors in Category II will be evaluated. Those include:

## CATEGORY II

PARAMETER	WEIGHTING FACTOR
d. Manageability	2
e. Habitat Diversity	2
f. Species Diversity	1
g. Connectedness	2
h. Rarity	2
i. Vulnerability	1
j. Nature Oriented Human Use	1

It is intended that project scoring be conducted by a team of reviewers, each of whom is familiar with all the projects. In this manner, any personal biases will carry through all the projects, rather than only reflect in one or two. All projects will be rated against each other so comparisons can be made among parcels, rather than adhering to a strict set of criteria for scoring purposes.

Based on this matrix, the SOR projects have been separated into two categories:

**Category A Projects:** Category A projects are those lands which received the highest relative scores when compared with all parcels evaluated for consideration for the Five Year Plan. These projects represent the best examples of lands within the District necessary for water management, water supply and conservation and protection of water resources.

**Category B Projects:** Category B projects are those parcels that meet the qualifications of the Save Our Rivers Program but ranked lower in relative score to all projects evaluated for consideration in the Five Year Plan. Should landowners contact the District regarding the sale of their lands in these project areas, an attempt will be made to secure those rights as a gift or a bargain sale.

**Legislatively Mandated Projects:** In 1981, when Florida Resources Rivers Act was passed, the Florida Legislature specified that three projects within the South Florida Water Management District be considered for purchase with the monies from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund.

- Water Conservation Areas
- Nicodemus Slough
- Savannahs

## 4. SOR SELECTION CRITERIA FOR WATER RESOURCE PROJECTS:

### Application

These criteria apply to projects designed primarily to

supply off-site water resource benefits. Thus, evaluation is performed not on the lands themselves, as with the resource-based matrix, but consider the use to which the lands would be put in context with a described project. Examples for benefits provided by such lands would be:

- Distribution systems to simulate sheet flow inputs into wetlands systems.
- Retention systems operated to simulate the natural hydrograph for delivery of water into natural wetlands, lakes or estuaries.
- Water quality treatment system utilizing managed or unmanaged wetland/marsh vegetation process.
- Groundwater recharge and/or water table control to facilitate recharge to aquifers or retain seepage from water storage facilities.
- Buffer, access or transitional areas necessary to protect core lands from adverse impacts, provide wildlife corridors, provide for public enjoyment of the core land, or isolate certain management practices such as flooding and prescribed burning.

## Criteria

Any land acquisition would require prior Governing Board approval of the subject plan.

- Proposed project lands are identified in a District Plan such as WUMP or SWIM, and
- Subject lands would be utilized to provide simulated or naturally functioning water resource quality/quantity benefits, and
- Lands would be part of the project resulting in net increase of natural resource values, when considering both any on-site losses and off-site gains, and
- Capital improvements, such as canals, levees, weirs and pumps shall be limited to only those necessary to achieve the proposed water resource benefits, and
- All appropriate funding sources for acquisition have been identified.

## E. LAND ACQUISITION GUIDELINES

### 1. GENERAL CRITERIA

- All projects on the plan shall be evaluated to determine the nature and extent of land interests that are necessary for acquisition in order to achieve the purposes for which the project was included in the plan.



- b. In order to maximize the overall benefits of the SOR Program, the District shall seek to acquire only the quality of the title necessary to achieve project purposes.

## 2. ACQUISITION PRIORITY

An acquisition priority analysis is conducted annually by the Land Management Department as part of the Five Year Plan preparation. The purpose of the analysis is to structure and direct the acquisition resources of the District. The criteria used to prioritize SOR projects are:

- a. Standing on District Strategic Plan
- b. Potential for Resource Loss
- c. Potential for Cooperative Acquisition
- d. Disposition of Owner(s)

## 3. NOTIFICATION OF OWNERS

As owners are identified in an approved Five Year Plan project, a notification letter will be mailed to them. The letter will briefly describe the program objectives and provide a focal point for future questions and discussion.

## F. NEGOTIATION GUIDELINES

Negotiation strategies for SOR acquisitions are detailed in Administrative Policy and Procedures 4.200.

### 1. CONSIDERATION OF APPRAISALS:

- a. After review and approval by the District's Real Estate Division, the Executive Director or his designee authorizes the use of a District appraisal for purchase negotiations with the appropriate land owners.
- b. If approved by the Executive Director or his designee, appraisals from other government agencies or non-profit organizations cooperating with the District on acquisition may also be used to establish just compensation values after review and approval by the District's Real Estate Division to establish just compensation.
- c. Two approved appraisals are required for all SOR acquisitions parcels which exceed \$500,000 based on preliminary value estimates by the District's chief real estate review appraiser. However, the Director of the Land Management Department or his designee may require two appraisals for any parcels estimated at less than \$500,000 to establish just compensation value in complex situations or for other extenuating circumstances.
- d. The District's review appraisal report determines

the just compensation value for all proposed acquisitions and resolves differences among two or more appraisals on any specific land parcel.

- e. An updated appraisal(s) is required every two years to account for long delays in the negotiating process. Updates in less than two years should be utilized by negotiators to account for rapidly changing values or other market conditions. Updates are recommended by the land acquisition negotiator and approved by the Appraisal Selection Committee. Authorization to proceed with negotiations using the updated appraisal is the same as a first appraisal.
- f. When a fee simple estate is acquired subject to outstanding interests such as a mineral interest, life estate, easement or lease, the purchase price shall be reduced in accordance with the affect the outstanding interests have upon the market value of the lands.

2. **PURCHASE:** SOR Director shall present a recommendation to the Board for approval of an offer to purchase according to Rule 40E 7.181.

3. **EMINENT DOMAIN:** When efforts to acquire lands through negotiation have been unsuccessful, the Board may authorize the use of eminent domain, where applicable.

4. **ECORDS:** Records of all contacts with property owners shall be retained in the Department of Land Management.

## G. PREPARATION OF FIVE YEAR PLAN:

An Acquisition Plan and Status Report shall be prepared by the committee and presented to the Governing Board annually, or more frequently, if considered necessary by the Board or the committee.

- 1. **THE ACQUISITION PLAN** shall include a written report of the favorable and unfavorable merits of each project selected for acquisition consideration and shall consider and evaluate in writing:
  - a. An assessment of the projects water management, water supply and conservation values including ecological values, vulnerability, endangerment and any other related environmental information.
  - b. The public purpose of the project, including the statutory authority;
  - c. An assessment of management cost, utilization, ownership, and appraised value estimates;
  - d. The determination whether the project conforms with local and state comprehensive plans or any other adopted governmental plans;

e. The determination whether the project meets one or more of the six criteria for Preservation 2000.

1. A significant portion of the land in the project is in imminent danger of development;

2. A significant portion of the land in the project is in imminent danger of subdivision which will result in multiple ownership and may make acquisition of the project more costly or less likely to be accomplished;

3. The value of a significant portion of the land in the project is likely to appreciate at a rate that makes purchasing the land immediately with bond proceeds more cost-effective than delaying its purchase until acquisition funds which are not bonded are available for the project;

4. A significant portion of the land in the project serves to protect or recharge groundwater and to protect other valuable natural resources or provide space for natural resource-based recreation;

5. The project can be purchased at 80 percent of appraised value or less; or

6. A significant portion of the land in the project serves as habitat for endangered or threatened species or serves to protect endangered natural communities, and

f. Potential management options.

The Plan shall identify lands needed to protect or recharge groundwater and shall establish a plan for the acquisition as necessary to protect potable water supplies. These lands shall also serve to protect other valuable resources or provide space for natural resource-based recreation. The Five Year Plan report will include a detailed summary of acquisition activity, modification or additions to the acquisition plan and a description of all land management activity.

2. BOARD CONSIDERATION OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN: As a minimum, the Board shall review all proposed projects and current projects on an annual basis. The Board shall annually adopt an update on the Five-Year Plans and after adoption, the projects approved shall be incorporated in a report and it will be made available to the public. The Board recognizes that the Five Year Plan is a list of projects that qualify for the program. Projects included on the Five Year Plan will not necessarily be acquired.

### SOR PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

*Please return ten copies of this form with ten copies of all referenced attachments to:*

Director, Save Our Rivers  
South Florida Water Management District  
P.O. Box 24680  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33416-4680

Please complete every question on this form. If necessary, designate N/A where a question is not applicable. Complete applications will receive more prompt and complete attention.

#### 1. Name and Location

Property Name (commonly known as) \_\_\_\_\_  
County (or counties) \_\_\_\_\_

Within Municipal Boundaries - Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Please attach a location map (8 1/2 by 11") specifying the property location and include a north arrow (map drawn to scale if possible); also please provide with any additional property maps or aerial photography which may further clarify the suggested project.

#### 2. Size

Estimated Number of Acres \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated Number of Parcels \_\_\_\_\_  
Estimated Acreage per parcel \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3. Access

Does the property front on a public road? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If not, describe type of legal access? \_\_\_\_\_



#### 4. Ownership Information

Identify the property owner and the contact address and telephone number

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#### 5. Survey Information

Are surveys and/or legal descriptions available? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, attached or specify where they may be obtained. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. Title Information

Are abstracts available from owner(s)? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do/Does owner(s) have title insurance policies? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

#### 7. SOR Qualifications

Provide detailed information concerning the qualifications of the property for E[17\$F[20\$Fwater management, water supply or the conservation and protection of water resources. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 8. Natural Characteristics

Provide a description of the natural characteristics of the property, including the predominant plant and animal life; specify types of trees and percentage of coverage, types of animal life, any rare, or endangered or threatened species, identified by Federal or State programs or other unique geological features, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

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Also, provide information on reports prepared by any other agencies on the physical characteristics of the property; if possible, attach a copy of the report. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 9. General History Influences

What are the historical and archaeological values of the property? \_\_\_\_\_

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Provide a description of general history of the property; include the identification of significant past disturbances, both natural and human; include dates of storm damage, fires, floods, exotic infestations, farming, grazing, mowing, or other site disturbances; also describe any structures, roads, rails, fences, etc.; is land involved in litigation (if yes, specify); is land on other public land acquisition lists (if yes, specify program and agency). \_\_\_\_\_

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#### 10. Buildings

Describe types and occupancy, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### 11. Future Impacts

Identify the anticipated future impacts which may have a negative affect on this property and whether the impacts are in the near future or are long range. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 12. Planning and Zoning

Indicate local zoning and land use designation (from future land use map) on each parcel. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Identify any other adopted state, regional and local plans that may affect the project; is it compatible with the State Water Use Plan? \_\_\_\_\_

### 13. Local Participation

Will the local government participate the funding? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

Provide in-kind services? Yes\_\_No\_\_

Assist the management? Yes \_\_No\_\_

If yes, to what extent? \_\_\_\_\_

### 14. Attachments

Identify and label each attachment: (with boundaries noted) Suggested attachments may include: zoning maps, soil maps, ownership maps, aerial photographs, vegetative maps, water resource maps, endangered species maps, on site photographs and U.S.G.S. Quadrangle maps.

Attachment A: \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment B: \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment C: \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment D: \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment E: \_\_\_\_\_

It is the policy of the Governing Board that inclusion of a property within the Five Year Plan pursuant to Section 373.59, F.S. does not reflect a definite intention by the South Florida Water Management District to acquire said property. Inclusion within the Five Year Plan indicates that the subject property has acquisition potential, depending upon further investigation as to its environmental and management features and the negotiation of a mutually acceptable acquisition price.

### 15. Form Completed by:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Please state affiliation to owner(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





# *Negotiating Strategy for Land Acquisition Program*

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## **A. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

1. The District's efforts in land acquisition must be timely, effective and cost efficient.
2. The District bases its land acquisition program on accepted appraisal reports according to Policy No.4.300.
3. The District's acquisition program include a policy of identifying, surveying, legally describing, assessing for environmental risks and appraising the desired land. Offers are then made to the land owners based on appraisal values. If the negotiations are unsuccessful, the District may proceed to use the power of eminent domain where applicable.
4. In the District's project program, acquisitions are made at not less than the minimum appraised value.
5. In the Save Our Rivers Program, acquisitions for less than minimum appraised value are authorized.
3. When the land is determined to be critical to the success of the project.
4. In both acquisition programs, the District employs an appraiser, or in some cases two (2) appraisers, to prepare a report determining the market value of the owner's interest in the land desired. The appraisers will include, when applicable, an indication of damages and/or cost to cure to the remainder.
5. When appraisers are engaged to determine market value, they may use three (3) approaches to determine value. Those approaches are the Market Data or Comparable Sale Approach, the Income Approach and the Cost Approach.
6. The Market Data or Comparable Sale Approach is widely accepted by the courts and actually supports its conclusion directly from the market itself.
7. The other two approaches are often used as support for the Market Data Approach but are rarely used alone.

## **B. SCOPE**

1. This policy shall apply to all real property acquisitions in the District.

## **C. PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

1. The South Florida Water Management District presently has two (2) programs which involve land acquisition.
2. The first program is the South Florida Water Management District and/or Army Corps of Engineers projects for flood control or water storage. This land acquisition program allows the District to exercise its right to eminent domain, if an amicable settlement cannot be reached.
3. The second program of land acquisition is the Save Our Rivers (SOR) Program. Under the SOR Program condemnation when authorized by law is appropriate:
  1. When the seller is willing in order to determine value.
  2. To complete a project for which the majority of the land has been acquired.
  3. The District will continue its policy of offering minimum appraised value to owners whose property is needed for District projects or when the District is acting as local sponsor for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
4. The District actively seeks donations or partial donations of land it finds important to its needs.
5. The Save Our Rivers Program seeks to acquire land from willing sellers on a negotiated basis. The policy is to negotiate with any willing seller and to pay no more than the maximum appraised value for the high priority lands.
6. When negotiating with owners whose property is of a lower priority, the District may notify the owners of the appraised value but explain that the District may pay less than the appraised value to purchase. In addition, the District will provide information to the owners concerning potential tax benefits of selling land to the District for less than the market value.

# *and Management Policy*

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## **I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

- A. The policies, procedures, and guidelines contained herein are established to provide for the management of District
- B. These policies, procedures, and guidelines shall apply to all District lands including, but not limited to, property acquired under the Save Our Rivers and Preservation 2000 programs.
- C. Nothing in these policies, procedures, and guidelines shall negate any statute, administrative rule, or other policy requirement.
- D. These policies, procedures, and guidelines will be reviewed at five (5) year intervals or earlier, if necessary, and updated as required. Public review and comment will be solicited as part of the review process.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

- A. Cooperative Management Agreement - An agreement between two or more agencies setting forth the respective duties and responsibilities of each agency in the management of a specific tract of land.
- B. Lead Agency - Agency designated as the prime managing entity for a given tract of land; generally provides the on-site staff required for public use management.
- C. Cooperating Agencies - Two or more agencies working together to operate a specific management unit.
- D. Management Unit - A single tract or combination of tracts under one management program.
- E. Wildlife Corridor - Two or more contiguous tracts of land forming a natural linkage for wildlife populations.
- F. Primary Resource Lands - Lands having high water resource, fish and wildlife, and recreational values requiring acquisition by gift or purchase.
- G. Buffer Lands - Those adjacent lands that can sustain some development provided sufficient control is maintained to prevent adverse impacts to the primary resource lands.
- H. Remainder Lands - Lands protected by local zoning that do not need to be placed in public ownership.

## **III. SELECTION OF LAND MANAGERS**

- A. The District shall strive to obtain the expertise and assistance required for the management of specific

tracts of land by entering into cooperative management agreements with other state and federal agencies, units of local government, and private non-profit organizations. The cooperative management agreement will designate a lead agency for management purposes.

- B. Where appropriate, the private sector will be encouraged to furnish certain management related facilities and services through the execution of real estate leases, agreements, and/or licenses.
- C. The District is charged by law with the responsibility for management of all lands that it acquires under the Save Our Rivers and Preservation 2000 programs and therefore, must act as the final arbiter of disputes on said lands arising between cooperating agencies.

## **IV. MANAGEMENT PLANS**

### **A. Conceptual Management Plan**

- 1. The preparation of a conceptual management plan (CMP) may be required for each major tract of land prior to acquisition. The CMP shall be prepared by or at the direction of the District.
- 2. Each CMP shall set forth a recommended management proposal and contain general background data on the property including but not limited to:
  - a. size, location, and access
  - b. history
  - c. existing land use and improvements
  - d. soils
  - e. topography
  - f. hydrology
  - g. vegetation
  - h. fish and wildlife resources
  - i. recreational potential
  - j. water quality, and
  - k. existing and potential impacts from adjacent areas
- 3. The process utilized by the District in developing the CMP shall solicit the comments and recommendations of individuals, organizations, local governments, and those regional, state and federal agencies having a stake in the management of the tract.

### **B. Operational Management Plan**

- 1. An operational management plan (OMP) shall be developed by the lead agency in consultation with the cooperating agencies for each major tract of land (or group of tracts) to be operated as a single management unit.
- 2. The OMP shall contain detailed information on the

status of the area's critical resources, set forth general and specific management goals, objectives, and guide lines for each, and outline the specific procedures, funding requirements, and activities necessary for their accomplishment.

3. The OMP shall be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary.

#### C. Annual Work Plans

1. An annual work plan shall be developed by each of the agencies participating in the management of a given unit.
2. Each work plan shall set forth the staffing levels, equipment and materials, funding requirements, and work activities proposed by the respective agency for implementation of the OMP.
3. The cooperating agencies shall meet at least once each year to discuss the status of the management unit and their planned activities for the upcoming year.

### V. GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

#### A. Water Resources

1. Management activities on Save Our Rivers and Preservation 2000 lands shall include conservation and protection of water resources.
2. The District shall not support or encourage any activities or development that would significantly alter the natural (undisturbed) movement and/or degrade the quality of surface or groundwater on management units.
3. Where feasible, an attempt shall be made to restore a more natural hydroperiod on tracts where the drainage patterns have been substantially altered.
4. Visitor programs shall inform and educate the public relative to the importance of the area in maintaining adequate supplies of good quality water for the South Florida area.

#### B. Fish and Wildlife Resources

1. Management activities on Save Our Rivers and Preservation 2000 lands shall seek to establish and maintain an appropriate number and variety of indigenous game and non-game species.
2. Particular emphasis shall be placed on the identi-

cation and management of critical habitat for endangered or threatened species residing on or frequenting the management units.

3. On areas where hunting will be allowed, consideration shall be given to the need for the establishment of sanctuary areas or "no hunting zones" to provide additional protection for endangered species and facilitate passive observation of wildlife.
4. Activities that may contribute to a decline in water quality and/or a reduction in critical wildlife habitat shall not be encouraged on management units.

#### C. Native Plant Communities

1. Management practices on Save Our Rivers and Preservation 2000 lands shall seek to restore and maintain an appropriate variety and distribution of native plant communities.
2. Particular emphasis shall be placed on the identification and protection of rare and endangered species.
3. The planting of exotic plant species shall be prohibited on all management units. Management practices will strive to identify existing infestations and to develop and implement appropriate control and/or eradication measures.
4. Management of the forest resources on select tracts shall be undertaken in consultation with the Division of Forestry.
5. Forest management practices shall strive to maintain age-class diversity and where appropriate, species diversity.

#### D. Archaeological and Historical Resources

1. The identification of sites within the management units that have unique archaeological and/or historical significance shall be undertaken in consultation with the Florida Bureau of History and Archives.
2. Management practices shall strive to protect these unique resources and in appropriate situations allow for the provision of access and interpretive facilities to enhance their appreciation and enjoyment by the public.

#### E. Public Use

1. Public access to and use of District lands for outdoor recreational activities including, but not limited to, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, swim-

ming, camping, hiking, canoeing, boating, diving, birding, sailing, jogging, and other related outdoor purposes shall be encouraged, consistent with the District's legal interest in said lands and the preservation and management of their water and environmental resources. Special consideration will be given to the provision of outdoor recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities.

2. A preliminary determination of allowable recreational activities will be set forth in the conceptual management plan (CMP) for each management unit. Spatial distribution of activities, intensity of use, and required support facilities and services will be addressed in the operational management plan (OMP). Future changes that may be necessary based on operational experience will be included in subsequent OMP updates and carried out in the annual work plans of the managing agencies.

3. The recreation assessment for each project or management unit will include an evaluation of the following issues:

- a. Title: Restrictions and/or prohibitions, if any, imposed by easements, leases, etc.
- b. Roads: Availability of access and circulation roads or other suitable points of entry; need for improvements.
- c. Environmental sensitivity: Compatibility of proposed activities, support facilities, and related improvements with ecosystem types; endangered species and/or critical habitats requiring special consideration.
- d. Operational requirements: Need for support facilities and services such as fences, gates, signage, entrance stations, parking areas, trails, campsites, rest rooms, shelters, maintenance staff, trash collection, security, and user fees.
- e. Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities: Feasibility of developing interpretive trails and nature observation opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- f. Management impacts: Limitations imposed by other planned land management practices such as prescribed burning, hydrologic restoration, reforestation, etc.

4. Pedestrian access to District lands for hiking, birding, photography, and nature appreciation will be allowed prior to the preparation and implementation of conceptual and operational management plans upon completion, establishment, or implementation of:

- a. Recreation assessment
- b. Risk assessment and removal and/or mitigation of identified hazards.
- c. Boundary survey and required posting.
- d. Authorized point(s) of entry.
- e. User rules and regulations.
- f. Security measures.

5. Recreational development will focus on the provision of basic facilities for access, health and safety, and interpretation. Where appropriate, consideration will be given to the provision of needed facilities and services through concession contracts and/or agreements with private non-profit organizations.

6. Rules and regulations governing the public use of each management unit shall be enforced by the appropriate management agency.

7. The construction, occupation, and/or maintenance of private camps and campsites on District land and water areas shall be prohibited.

8. Vehicular travel on District lands by the public shall be generally restricted to the use of conventional vehicles licensed for street use on roads designated by the managing agencies for public use. The use of airboats, swamp buggies, tracked vehicles, motor cycles and other types of off road vehicles on most management units shall be prohibited.

9. Entrance and user fees, permits, licenses and/or advance reservations may be required for entry onto and use of project lands where considered necessary by the managing agency to supplement operating expenses and/or to properly regulate public use.

10. Educational programs will be developed and implemented on select project lands by the District and/or other managing agencies to increase visitor awareness of, and appreciation for, the natural resources of these areas and the vital role of water management in maintaining their viability and productivity.

#### **F. Agricultural Use**

1. Agricultural activities conducted on Save Our Rivers lands shall be limited to the grazing of livestock on native range and farming practices contributing to the production of food and cover for wildlife.

2. The conversion of native range to improved pasture shall be prohibited on all management units.

3. To the extent practical, management practices shall seek to convert existing improved pastures to native range.



4. The development and implementation of livestock grazing programs on management units shall be undertaken in consultation with the Soil Conservation Service.
5. Managing agencies shall implement measures to reduce potential conflicts between livestock grazing operations and concurrent recreational use.

#### G. Bee Leases and Apiaries

1. Consideration may be given by the District to the establishment of apiaries on management units through the development and awarding of appropriate leases.
2. Current state of Florida Statutes, guidelines and standards regarding fees, distance between sites and from property boundaries, and related matters will be utilized in developing lease specifications.
3. Leases shall not be transferable or assignable in whole or in part without the written consent of the District.
4. If an existing annual lease is not renewed, the former lease holder shall have thirty (30) days from the expiration of the lease to remove all of his/her capital improvements from the area. Future leasing of this site shall then be determined through a publicly announced drawing conducted by the District.

#### H. Other

1. District shall support those research and academic endeavors on management units by qualified agencies, educational institutions, and public and private conservation organizations that will contribute to more effective management and use of these areas.
2. Requests from government and/or private sources for permission to place signs, roads, power lines, pipelines, and similar items on or through Save Our

Rivers or Preservation 2000 property shall be approved by the District only when the applicant has affirmatively demonstrated that the proposed use is consistent with preservation and enhancement of the area's natural resources and scenic values and use of the area by the public for recreational purposes. Requests to place billboards on Save Our Rivers or Preservation 2000 property will be denied.

3. Management decision making shall consider whether the lands are primary resource lands, remainder lands, or buffer lands.
4. Local government support shall be encouraged throughout the management process particularly with respect to the regulation of buffer areas and the creation of wildlife corridors.
5. Where necessary, to protect the resources of the property, law enforcement assistance will be requested from the appropriate agency.
6. Detailed procedures to implement this policy are identified in the Land Acquisition/Management Procedures flow chart.
7. The District may lease any lands, or interests in lands in accordance with Section 40E-9.961, Florida Administrative Code and Section 373.093, Florida Statutes, so long as the requested use is not inconsistent with the purposes for which the property was acquired.
8. The District may convey any interest in lands to other governmental entities for management in accordance with Section 40E-9.961, Florida Administrative Code and Section 373.056, Florida Statutes, so long as the requested use is not inconsistent with the purposes for which the property was acquired.
9. The District may permit the usage or occupancy of right of way, works, or lands in accordance with Chapter 40E-6, Florida Administrative Code and Section 373.085, Florida Statutes, so long as the requested use is not inconsistent with the purposes for which the property was acquired.

**Approved by**  
The District Governing Board  
September 9, 1993

**Principal Editor**  
Lee Henderson

**Contributors**  
William Helfferich, Fred Davis,  
Fred Schiller, Ken Foote,  
Robert Glancy, Mia VanHorn

**Technical Assistance**  
Izell Wilson

**Maps & Graphics**  
Vicky Fairman  
C. Jane Walters

**Design & Layout**  
Grace Colon

**Photographs**  
Gene Lee, Cindy Rezaeck



Save Our Rivers  
**SOR**  
Land For Waters' Sake